

How Many Sides
to a Chinese Coin?

Myra Scovel

AN ORIGINAL PAPERBACK

HOW MANY SIDES TO A CHINESE COIN?

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This is a book for young people sharply portraying some of the tensions of living in China today.

Much of the action occurs in a police station, where a boy named Li Fu Min and a girl, Wong Ai Hua, work. Both are teenagers born in Communist China, who have never known any other government.

Ai Hua is haunted by the idea that she betrayed her father, a Christian minister and a victim of a government purge, when she was a small child. But his principles conflict with those of her Red Book, statements of Chairman Mao, whom she reveres.

Just living with her grandmother reminds Ai Hua of her father. To find out more about him, Ai Hua commits a crime against the state and Fu Min is forced to decide whether to save her — and risk his own skin.

When the brother of Fu Min arrives from the north with the Red Guard, the lives of all grow more complicated.

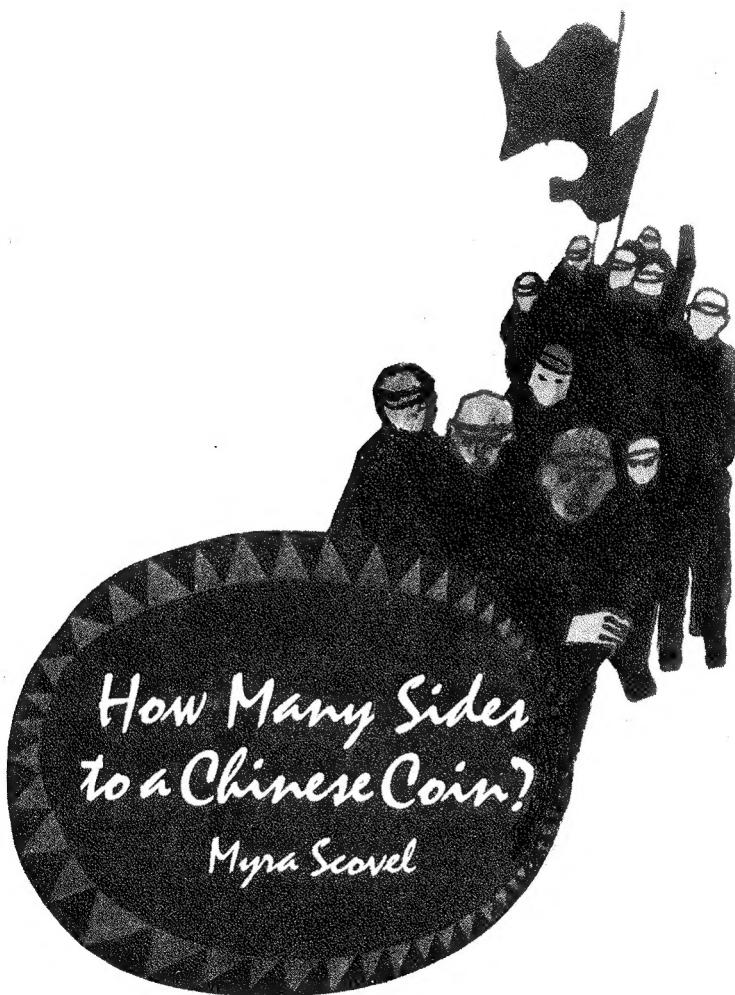
How would you feel and what would you do in such a situation? Here is opportunity to move "inside the skin" of persons growing up in present-day mainland China.

COVER DESIGN BY JOHN GRETZER

For Michael,
with love.

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Study Guide by David Ng

Illustrated by John Gretzer

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*The author wishes to express her deep
gratitude to the Chinese friend who has
given careful attention to the reading
of this manuscript. It is regrettable
that his name must be withheld.*



"You'd better keep that old woman away from this police station," said Li Fu-min, as he bent over the desk where Wong Ai-hua was sorting the cards of suspects. "Why isn't she in the Old Ladies' Home, as she should be?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Ai-hua. She knew very well what he was talking about—Grandmother had been annoying Inspector Ch'en again. Ai-hua was blushing; she knew it. Fu-min knew it, too; he was grinning his infuriating grin. It made him just that much more good-looking and her cheeks flushed hotter. "*I do* wish he'd go away and leave me alone," she said to herself.

Suddenly Fu-min straightened, his face serious. Inspector Ch'en had appeared at the door of his office. Fu-min only had time to whisper, "He's had about all he can take," before going back to the office at the end of the hall. Inspector Ch'en asked Ai-hua for one of the cards from her file and returned to his desk.

Something would have to be done about Grandmother. Ai-hua had known the time would come, but what could she do?

Grandmother was a troublemaker, if you could call a troublemaker one who appointed herself a committee of one to see that wrongs were righted. But why did she have to bring all the grievances in the city of Canton to Inspector Ch'en, who was in charge of but one small precinct? What's more, he was Ai-hua's boss and if Grandmother went too far, Ai-hua would lose her job.

If only she could persuade Grandmother to keep away from the police station! But Grandmother belonged to the old days, and nothing could convince her that it was proper for a girl in her teens to work with men in a police station ("of all places"). It did no good to remind her that this was Ai-hua's contribution to the Communist cause and her country's welfare.

Inspector Ch'en broke through her thoughts. "I'm going out and I'm not sure when I'll be back," he said, hurrying to the front door. He would have to cross the courtyard where Grandmother was keeping watch to see that all was well with her grandchild.

"Beloved God," Ai-hua prayed, "just this once, don't let her stop the inspector."

"There, I've done it again," she said to herself, "this bad habit of praying when I get in a tight spot. Will I ever break away from the old superstitions?"

She hurried to the front window. God, if there was a God, had not bothered to answer her prayer. She held her breath as Grandmother slid off the stone bench with the help of her long staff and hobbled to meet the inspector. What would that dear old lady want of him this time? Once it had been a complaint about the cleanliness of a public latrine on a street miles from where they lived. The smell was troubling a young mother who was expecting another baby. How did Grandmother find out all she knew? She seemed to spend most of her time on the stone bench, though there were days when she would be gone for hours. Did she wander around the city? She couldn't pos-



sibly have walked as far as the home of that young mother.

And Grandmother was so outspoken when she disagreed with what the government was doing. With her completely outmoded ideas and her insistence upon them, she was talking herself into serious trouble. She was talking her granddaughter into serious trouble, too.

It was all right this time. Inspector Ch'en, in no mood for conversation, had brushed past the old lady with a wave of his hand and for once she had not clutched his sleeve and hung on. With a sigh of relief, Ai-hua saw the stiff, trim figure of the inspector disappear behind the concrete wall immediately in front of the main gate. Now he would be on the street outside. Had God taken care of it after all? As Fu-min would say, "Ridiculous."

Grandmother, hobbling back to her bench, was muttering aloud her disappointment at having failed in her quest. Something would indeed have to be done about Grandmother. But what?

Ai-hua went into Inspector Ch'en's office, deciding to empty his teapot and give it a good washing while he was out. She took it back to the washroom and flushed the tea leaves down the toilet. In the moment of silence when the toilet stopped filling, she could hear a file drawer open in Fu-min's office behind her. You could tell the difference between the two men for whom she worked just by the way they opened their files, she thought, as she washed the teapot in the hand basin. Inspector Ch'en ground the drawers open like a tank going over the pavement in the October First parade; then banged them shut defiantly, though he never seemed as cross as the file drawers sounded; frustrated, perhaps, more than cross. Fu-min slid his file drawers open quietly, like water running over tiny pebbles. Fu-min did everything quietly.

Those files! What stories they could tell of the enemies of her beloved Chairman Mao! There would be folders in those drawers of people from all over the world, she thought—Brit-

ish, French and American imperialists; business men, missionaries, teachers and doctors, who said they had come to China to help the people but who really were exploiters or spies. And what of her own countrymen who had opposed the new, forward-looking government? How *could* they have, when before their eyes were all the wonderful changes being made for the good of the people? It was hard to understand why any Chinese would want to oppose the good works they saw.

Were there, in those files, a few innocent ones who loved their country and had been trying their best to help—like her father? Or had he, too, been an enemy of the people? Ai-hua wished she could know the truth about him; the few stories she had heard were so conflicting.

In her agitation, an obstreperous curl had slipped from under the visor of her cap. She could feel it tickling her forehead. As she glanced up to tuck it back, she found Fu-min staring at her from the mirror. She had left the door of the washroom open so she could hear anyone coming into the office. Fu-min's door was always open. She should have thought of that. There he stood in his office across the hall directly behind her, a sheaf of papers in his hand. As their eyes met, the blood once more mounted to her cheeks; she felt as if she were going to choke. He smiled his maddening smile and walked out of the mirror's frame.

Ai-hua was so flustered that she dropped the teapot she'd been holding in one hand while she fixed her hair. It crashed into the enamel washbowl and broke into jagged pieces. Fu-min quickly dropped the papers into the file and with three lithe steps was beside her, helping her to pick up the pieces, fitting them together to see if the pot could be mended.

"Absolutely hopeless," he said. "But don't worry. I'll buy the inspector another teapot. After all, it *was* my fault."

The nerve of him! The colossal nerve of him, thinking he could so upset her emotionally that. . . . "Oh, I hate him, I hate him," she said to herself. She snatched the pieces from

his hand as the back door opened behind her. Someone had come in. Inspector Ch'en? Her eyes asked Fu-min the question. He was facing the intruder, open-mouthed. Recovering, he said very gently, "What are you doing here, Lao T'ai T'ai?"

Grandmother again! Could anything more go wrong today? But even in her anxiety, she realized that Fu-min had given Grandmother the honorific title, Venerable Lady.

"I'd decided to go for a little walk and was just passing the window when I heard the crash," said Grandmother.

Ai-hua knew very well that Grandmother had had no plans for a walk. She had made one of her periodic checks and had found that her granddaughter was not at her desk. Knowing that all the policemen were out except Fu-min and that the inspector had just left, she was doing the rounds of the windows to see what was happening. Hearing the crash, she had feared the worst and, for the first time, had braved the inside of the police station. The picture before her could not have been reassuring—the two of them standing in the washroom, looking guilty, each clutching his half of the broken part with the spout and refusing to relinquish it.

"Ch'en's teapot? Tsk, tsk," was all Grandmother said.

"I was washing it," said Ai-hua, trying to take the piece away from Fu-min.

"I was just clearing up before going out to buy another," said Fu-min, holding firmly to his half of the broken bit. "I'll have a teapot exactly like it on his desk when he gets back, and no one will know the difference."

"You *couldn't* do such a thing," said Ai-hua. "It wouldn't be honest. Besides, you'd never find another like it. This is a most special teapot; it means something very deep in Inspector Ch'en's life. It may have come from his ancestral home; it cannot be replaced. The fault was entirely mine. I shall, of course, confess it as you would have done, Comrade Li. I must tell the inspector I am sorry."

"You're crazy," said Grandmother. "You'll do nothing of the

kind. You've been here long enough to know Inspector Ch'en when he is angry."

"It would be ridiculous to make a big thing of this," said Fu-min. "It's only a teapot."

"It's Ch'en's teapot," said Grandmother, ominously.

"What has to be done, has to be done," said Ai-hua. "I will tell the inspector I have broken his precious teapot."

"She's a strange mixture, your grandchild," said Fu-min. "Some people say what they know should be said and think what they choose. She tries to think what she knows should be thought. Yet, she'll come up with a silly superstition like this one about the inspector's affection for a teapot from his bourgeois past, instead of his simply using the thing as a pot to pour tea from."

There was silence for a moment, no one knowing what to say or do. In the meantime, Grandmother had been collecting the broken pieces, taking the spout from their hands without their realizing it, tying the fragments in her handkerchief.

Fu-min turned and looked into the eyes of Ai-hua, but continued to address his remarks to Grandmother. "Or is your granddaughter implying that the inspector does not choose to forget his reactionary past? A rather serious accusation, if that's what she means. But as much as she likes Inspector Ch'en, and as excellent a job as she knows he is doing here, she would not hesitate to do her duty as a good Communist and criticize him in public if she knew he were wrong. It would break her heart, but she would do it. What do you think, Lao T'ai T'ai?"

"Oh God, clap a hand over his mouth," prayed Ai-hua. What was he trying to do—test her loyalty? Or was he trying to change the situation so that the inspector would appear guilty? What did Grandmother think?

"You young people are the ones who know everything," she said tartly. "Since when has an old woman who's lived long years, known hundreds of people and experienced all that life has to offer, been called upon to give an opinion? The wise and

the experienced are only worth putting in an Old Ladies' Home to await death."

"Grandmother!" said Ai-hua, horrified.

"Come now, don't be angry, Lao T'ai T'ai," Fu-min was using his smoothest approach, and Grandmother was falling for it. "What makes your grandchild different from the rest of us? Along with her intense loyalty to Chairman Mao and all that Communism stands for, she has this underlying feeling for individual people, which, of course, is unsound. The individual is not important, and all his little hopes must be plowed under so that the ground may be cleared of such weeds. Then the aspirations of the state can flourish.

"But your granddaughter keeps insisting that we as individuals are important. I really believe she cares what happens to each one of us. That's what I meant when I said it would break her heart to accuse Inspector Ch'en, even though it would be the right thing to do. Why is she like this, Lao T'ai T'ai?"

"It's her Christian background," said Grandmother. Fu-min smiled.

"He has what he wants—more information about me," thought Ai-hua. "How very clever of him! No wonder Inspector Ch'en has given him a position of trust; yet he must still be less than twenty years old. But how will he use this information?"

"Tell me more," said Fu-min, and Grandmother was off on her favorite complaint.

"I warned my son that no good would come of his turning away from the gods of his ancestors. It was not enough that he would leave his old mother in the grave with no one to carry out the family rites; no, he even went so far as to become a kind of priest—pastor, he called it—to the barbarian religion of the West. Well, he has 'sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind,' I'll quote one of his own verses back to him, though he'll never hear it."

"Why not?" Fu-min urged her on.

"Because they came and took him away, that's why not. It's

a good thing for Ai-hua that I was only an old lady who didn't count any more; otherwise they would have taken me, too, and she barely ten years old."

"Who were 'they'?" Fu-min asked softly.

"The great Chairman Mao's police, who else?" Grandmother replied. "My son was accused right here in this police station by a young whippersnapper like you, and if you weren't who you are, I'd tell you that not a word that young idiot said about Ai-hua's father was true."

"Grandmother, some day you are going to go too far once too often," said Fu-min. Now that he had what he wanted, Ai-hua thought she detected a hint of steel in his voice. But Grandmother was ready for him.

"Oh? By the way, Chief Inspector Han is a friend of mine," she said. "He has his eye on you for promotion. He might be interested in knowing where you were when the teapot got broken."

"Grandmother! This is absolutely uncalled for," said Ai-hua. How could Grandmother possibly say that Chief Inspector Han, Head of Intelligence for their whole section of the country, was a friend of hers? She wrote letters to him, but Grandmother wrote to everybody important when she wanted something done. And even if he were interested in Fu-min, how could Grandmother know about it? If she were trying to bring pressure to bear on Fu-min, this was no time to do it. He might consider it a serious offence, and Ai-hua was in enough trouble.

If Fu-min was angry, he did not show it; he had lapsed into his carefree attitude. "Isn't she a character?" he said to Ai-hua, then added, "So you are a Christian. It explains a lot."

"You know very well she isn't," said Grandmother, disgustedly. "The great Chairman Mao would be lucky if all his followers were as good Communists as she is."

"I try so hard to be," said Ai-hua, looking up at Fu-min pleadingly. How *was* he going to use his new-found information? Did she, too, have a file in the room across the hall?

"Come," said Grandmother, "enough of this. The shadows are long; it is time to go home. Inspector Ch'en will not be back until late; I happen to know. He will not miss his teapot until morning. I must take the pieces home to study them, so that I'll know what to do. Come now."

"I'll wait for him," said Fu-min, "but don't worry, Comrade Wong, I'll let you do your own confessing. Good-night, Lao T'ai T'ai. Good-night, our good little Communist."

Was Fu-min being sarcastic? Ai-hua was too tired to figure out what he meant by this and everything else he'd been saying.



That evening, when Grandmother went to work on the teapot, it took her only a few moments to come to her conclusions. In the light of the bean oil lamp, she examined each piece, smelling it, rubbing the smooth surfaces with her thumb. Then she wrapped them again, smiling with satisfaction.

Ai-hua, lying in bed watching her, did not feel at all like smiling. The first flush of her bravery had worn off. Perhaps Grandmother had been right; perhaps she *was* crazy to confess to Inspector Ch'en. She shuddered at the thought. When morning came, would she dare to carry out the plan she had insisted was the only right way out? It might have been better to let Fu-min try to find another teapot.

"What am I saying," she asked herself, suddenly sitting up in bed. What would my father think of me? What would Chairman Mao think of me? She reached for the pocket of her jacket, which hung on a nearby chair, and found her little red book, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*. "I've neglected my reading today," she said to herself. "How many times *have* I read? Certainly not five, as I should have."

She looked up at the large photo of Chairman Mao, hanging on the wall behind Grandmother. Sometimes his benevolent face merged with the memories of her father's face.

Opening the book, she turned to the chapter on "Youth" and read, "The world is yours, as well as ours, but in the last analysis, it is yours. You young people, full of vigour and vitality, are in the bloom of life, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning. Our hope is placed on you. . . . The world belongs to you. China's future belongs to you."

It was as if Chairman Mao himself had given her the message. Everything would be all right. As she fell asleep, she thought she heard her father saying the same words, "China's future belongs to you. . . ." But her father had always added, "and you belong to God."

Her sleep was troubled by dreams. Inspector Ch'en himself, and all the men she knew so well on the police force, had crowded into their little mud-brick house and were going to take her away. The men did not want to take her away; they looked at her with sympathy—all except one she had never seen before, who kept coming closer and closer. She appealed to Inspector Ch'en, but he stood apart, cold, hard, impassive, with no trace of his usual concerned, worried frown. Fu-min was not there. Yes, he was. He was standing in the corner watching, doing nothing to help her. As the unknown policeman lurched forward and grabbed her arm, she tried to scream.

"Time to get up." It was Grandmother shaking her. "We must be sure to arrive at the police station before the inspector does," she said.

Still half asleep, Ai-hua asked, "Where are the ration tickets? Have I lost my place in the vegetable line? Oh, Grandmother, we're completely out of food. What shall we do?" She was now fully awake.

"There, there, stop worrying about food. We have a big day ahead of us. Besides, I've already been in line and we have some good fresh vegetables in our basket."



"Why didn't you call me earlier, Grandmother? You shouldn't have had to go. You must have waited hours in that line."

"I didn't stop to get any meat, so it didn't take too long. There's never any meat left in that line anyway. Now don't use your energy worrying. We have to hurry."

As they walked through the all but empty streets of Canton in the chill of early morning, Ai-hua's fears returned with full force. She wanted to run away and had to make herself keep in step beside Grandmother.

"You need something to eat. We have time," said the old lady. "You've only had tea this morning."

They stopped at the street vendor's—the woman who often sold them bowls of hot gruel and the long, crisp, unsweetened crullers which had been brought into Canton originally by the liberating army from the north.

"You're very quiet today, Big Sister Wong," said the vendor. "I hope all is well."

"All is well," said Grandmother, and was silent. She did not even add her usual, "Things have come to a pretty pass when two women sit down to eat in a public place, and on the street in front of everyone! Tsk, tsk!"

It was almost too cool under the canvas covering, and Ai-hua dreaded getting up and going on. Grandmother had already pushed her wooden bench away from the rough table, so there was nothing to do but pay the vendor and leave.

Questions were piling up in her mind and she wanted so much to talk to Grandmother, but when the old lady was thinking out one of her plans, it never did any good to ask questions; she simply did not choose to hear anything that was said. When they reached the police station, Grandmother took up her position on the stone bench, ready to pounce on the inspector as soon as he turned the corner into the courtyard.

Fu-min had arrived early, as usual. He was in the back office, probably writing up yesterday's reports. Did those reports

include the conversation with Grandmother? He did not come out of his office on some pretext to say good-morning to her, as he usually did.

Ai-hua hadn't the courage to go to the window to see whether or not Inspector Ch'en had arrived. The waiting seemed endless. She tried to work, but found she was making mistakes. She was shaking like a willow leaf. This would never do; she must prepare herself. She tried to stand, but sank back into her chair. Then she heard Grandmother's voice raised in greeting and knew that the inspector was in the courtyard. What were they saying? Whatever it was, it was taking a long time. At last she heard his footsteps at the door.

"God, help me," she almost said, but stifled the prayer. She would depend upon no superstitions. She would stand upon her own two feet, and hold her head high.

"Inspector Ch'en, I wish to confess a serious error," she began, without a quaver in her voice, though she kept her eyes lowered, fearing she might weaken if she saw his face.

Then a miracle happened. Inspector Ch'en's voice was as gentle as a woman's. "I know about the teapot, Comrade Wong," he said. "Your grandmother has told me. A wise woman, your grandmother, as I have found on occasion before—a persistent meddler, but a very wise woman."

"I am so sorry," said Ai-hua, now looking at him. "It was careless of me, and stupid. I know the teapot meant a lot to you. . . ."

"I've needed a new one for a long, long time," he said. The tense wrinkles in his forehead were gone. Why, he was almost smiling! She had never seen the inspector smile before.

"Now let's get to work," he said, then called Fu-min. "Li, bring me the file on the foreign hospital in the suburb."

When Fu-min came out of the inspector's office, he turned to Ai-hua in puzzled amazement. "He acts as if a load had been lifted from his shoulders," he whispered.

Ai-hua couldn't wait until evening to see Grandmother. She

would find some reason to go into the courtyard, perhaps to pick up any papers that might be blowing around. But when she got to the front window, she saw that Grandmother's bench was empty.

It was late when the old lady returned. She had never before been gone so long. And on this, of all days, when Ai-hua was all but exploding to know what Grandmother had said to the inspector. "Where on earth have you been?" she asked, when Grandmother at last hobbled into the courtyard.

"I had to go on an errand for Inspector Ch'en," she said, "a little unfinished business on the other side of the city." Her face was the color of cold ashes and she seemed exhausted.

"Sit down and rest for a little while," said Ai-hua. "We don't have to hurry home." But Grandmother insisted upon starting out at once. As soon as they had passed the crowded area and had come to a place where they could talk without being overheard, Ai-hua blurted out, "What *did* you tell the inspector about the teapot this morning? Please tell me."

Immediately the old lady perked up, highly pleased at what she had been able to accomplish. "It was nothing, really. My examination of the teapot confirmed what I had already suspected. The tea used was one of the better Fukien brands. The pot was an excellent old K'ang Hsi porcelain. Ch'en's tastes are the finest. He is a proud man, an intellectual. Therefore he must have come from a wealthy home. This much was obvious. But the inspector doesn't have the relaxed poise of the usual man of wealth and culture."

"I don't see what that has to do with. . . ."

"Don't interrupt. I had often wondered why he was coiled like a tight spring inside; why he always expected too much of himself and couldn't accept himself for what he was. My guess was that he had spent most of his life trying to please his father. But this was only a guess. I had to know of a certainty if you were to be relieved of your troubles. If I had guessed wrong? Well, I had to take that chance. For your sake, I am glad that

my surmises were correct. Now, what are we going to have for supper?"

"Grandmother! You haven't told me anything!"

"What more is there to say? I could only come to the conclusion that Ch'en's father had been one of those stinking landlords, cruel to the people who worked for him and cruel to his family. At least that's one good thing you Communists have done—got rid of them. But don't forget, young lady, there were also good landlords. My father-in-law was one. I wish you could have seen the way he. . . ."

"Oh Grandmother, you can be so exasperating!" She knew from the old lady's face that she shouldn't have said it. This was just the sort of thing that would make her close her lips tightly and remain silent. "I'm sorry, Grandmother. I didn't really mean it; honestly I didn't. Forgive me. May I know what happened to Inspector Ch'en this morning? He seemed like a new man."

"The young are indeed stupid, and I might add, disrespectful. Isn't it evident that under the circumstances, Ch'en would have had a very demanding father? Ch'en may well have hated his father, but having been brought up to believe that strict filial piety was his duty, Ch'en wouldn't have realized that he hated him. You see, Comrade Ch'en was still weighted down by his Confucian heritage. Being a good Communist, he wanted to throw off this old baggage, but because he had been under the oppression of his strong-willed father, he was still trying to fulfill his duty as a proper son."

"Inspector Ch'en is just like me," thought Ai-hua, "but the load I carry is a Christian heritage."

"Well, if all this were true," Grandmother went on, enjoying her story, "Ch'en would be suffering from a feeling of guilt. He may even have wondered if something he let slip had contributed to getting his father accused and done away with." The old lady sighed. "This is what China has come to. We old people can expect nothing but cruelty at the hands of our

young, unless we agree with their every foolish whim. They want us out of their way, every one of us. Old Ladies' Home! Bah!"

Ai-hua tried another tactic. "And this is what you told Inspector Ch'en?"

"Of course not, child. Inspector Ch'en is not such an idiot as you young people. He was shocked at first, thinking from the way I began that I had known his family intimately. I was relieved to see that I was on the right track. Luckily, too, he spoke of the teapot right away. 'I've always kept my father's teapot,' he said. 'I can see him now, warming his hands as he clutched the pot.' "

"But didn't that frighten you when you realized how precious the teapot was to him?" asked Ai-hua.

"Ah, how little you know of life! The same hands warming on the teapot had held Ch'en in a vise-like grip. You notice he used the word 'clutched'? It took only a short time to show Inspector Ch'en that his father's hold on him was now completely broken. By a slight accident, the pot had been smashed and I had thrown the pieces into the canal that very morning. Remind me to do so when we pass the canal tonight. After we had talked a while, I said, 'Inspector Ch'en, you are a free man.' He had been all along, of course, but he didn't realize it until today."

"What a woman she is!" Ai-hua thought. "She should be a detective on our force." Suddenly the thought struck her, "Maybe she is! So many of her actions bear this out."

"Aiya!" Grandmother sighed. "It's been a tiring day for an old lady, and I ought to write a letter to Chief Inspector Han tonight. Here's the canal."

She shook out her handkerchief and the broken pieces of the teapot slipped from sight as the current washed them away. Ai-hua felt as relieved as Inspector Ch'en must have felt that morning. She gave the old lady a hug as they walked along, though it was rare for either of them to show such emotion.

"A wise woman," Inspector Ch'en had said. Yes, it all made sense: Grandmother's stopping him in the courtyard so often; Grandmother's disappearing for hours; Grandmother's making a trip across the city to see someone (the affair of the latrines could have been a blind); Grandmother's being able to get away with not going to the Old Ladies' Home; and now, another of her letters to the great Chief Inspector Han. Everything pointed to her being a private detective. But whose side was she on?

Three



After their supper of rice, vegetables and bean curd, Grandmother insisted she felt better. Ai-hua watched her as she got out the porcelain mug that held the brushes, poured water into the flat dish and began rubbing the beautifully molded rectangle of ink, the one with the two dragons embossed upon it. When the ink was the right color and consistency, Grandmother smoothed the rice paper, arranged the bean oil lamp and began her letter to Chief Inspector Han.

No one Ai-hua knew could make as beautiful Chinese characters as her grandmother. Ai-hua liked to watch the sweep of her strokes down the page, but tonight she did not go near the table, sensing that this message was a secret one.

Now the old lady set aside her brush. "There, that's done," she said, waving her hand back and forth to dry the ink. "Ai-ya! I have to do the work of a man as well as a woman. It's a great pity your mother died when you were born, Ai-hua. I might have had grandsons to look after us. I *would* have had grandsons if your father had not been so stubborn. He would not marry again after your mother died, no matter how hard I tried to

force the idea. ‘My parish is now my wife,’ he would say. ‘The church is my wife.’ ‘The church won’t give me grandsons,’ I’d tell him, but it did no good. I don’t know what made him so religious. Nobody else in the family ever was. Well, one of the relatives, whose name I won’t mention, married a Christian against my wishes. After all I did for him, too!”

Ai-hua had heard the complaints many times. She changed the subject. “How did it happen that you, a girl, learned to write? You must have been the only one in your whole village who had an education.”

“So that’s what you’ve been taught! Women have always wielded a powerful hand in China. You’d know it if you Communists didn’t change the history books to suit yourselves.”

“Sh-h-h!”

“I will not sh-h-h! We’ve had women rulers, even an empress. Of course I wasn’t the only educated woman in my village. I can think of at least two others who could read.”

Ai-hua smiled to think of all the children, boys and girls, in school today in every village in the whole country.

“You Communists think that nothing happened in China for the good of the people until you came along.” Grandmother was warming to one of her favorite arguments. “Why, we were working with the potter’s wheel four thousand years ago, were spinning silk and carving jade a short five hundred years after that. Astronomers were setting down their findings and building complicated instruments five hundred years before the so-called Christian era began.”

“Yes, Grandmother, but these were intellectual pursuits. And the peasants lived out their suffering lives, generation after generation.”

“I’ve known many a happy farmer in my time. Poor suffering peasants, bosh!”

“You yourself said it was a good thing to do away with the landlords, and that is only one of the reforms our government has made. Now the land belongs to the people and. . . .”

"You are right. The land belongs to the people. Now the people have to pay the taxes, not the landlords. Do you call that improvement?"

It hurt Ai-hua to have Grandmother so against all she believed in most. She tried to tell the old lady of the bravery and endurance of their leader, Chairman Mao, when he led the workers and peasants on the Long March, a distance of six thousand miles; and of how, on the nineteenth of October, 1935, the survivors reached Shensi Province and built up the Chinese People's Liberation Army that fought the valiant fight to make all Chinese free. But nothing Ai-hua could say would make Grandmother change her old ideas.

"Do you think I do not know today's history, too?" Grandmother was almost shouting. "Don't you forget, young lady, that the peasants in Northern Shensi had already driven out their landlords when Liu Chi-tan set up his own republic."

It was no use. Grandmother would have some bit of information to top anything Ai-hua said. Where did she learn all she knew? The wall posters and newspapers would give her the daily happenings, but certainly not an item like the peasant revolt in Shensi long ago. She must get the old lady to calm down. Someone outside or in the apartment house next door might hear her.

Sometimes Ai-hua wished she could live in that apartment house with all the rest of the civil workers, but Grandmother had been shocked that single men and women were living in the same building, and had hunted around until she found these two small rooms of sun-baked clay in the courtyard, built against the apartment house wall.

Grandmother must have fallen asleep. Her head had dropped over on the table. Ai-hua went to her and put her arm around the old lady's shoulders. "Come, I'll pour you a cup of hot tea before you go to bed. It has been a long, hard day for you."

Grandmother lifted her head. She did not look well. One side of her mouth sagged and the tea spilled as she drank.

"I should not have tried to talk to her tonight," Ai-hua thought. "She is much too tired. If only she could be a good Communist and forget her reactionary ideas. She must have a powerful influence on somebody or she would have been sent to a place of study long before this." She helped the old lady into bed, pulled the quilt over her and patted her shoulder a moment or two. Grandmother was snoring in no time.

Ai-hua went to the door for a breath of fresh air. She would read from her little red book, then go to bed. Moonlight washed over her face. She closed her eyes and let the soft breeze lift her hair.

What if Grandmother were sick? How could Ai-hua care for her and work, too? If only there had been a grandson! What would it be like to have a brother? To have a father?

Everything she heard about her father made her long to know more. Her memories were only fragments—the Ch'ing Ming Festival when he had taken her to the park to swing. She must have been very young, for as the air rushed past her, she had been frightened. Her father held her in his arms until she was calm again. Then he took her back to the swing and showed her how she could use her feet to push and go as slowly as she wished. Before the afternoon was over, she was urging him to push her higher and higher until the leaves of the trees brushed her hair and the sky was near enough to kiss. And when they got home, he told Grandmother how brave she'd been.

Could a man like her father possibly have been an enemy of the people? Such a thing could not be.

Suddenly she felt the presence of someone near her. A man stepped from the shadows and closed a hand over her mouth just as she was about to scream. It was Fu-min.

"Quiet, Ai-hua," he whispered. It was the first time he had ever called her by her name. His hand brushed her cheek softly as he released her. Then he took her by the shoulders and with deep worry in his eyes, said, "I need your help."

"What is the matter, Fu-min?" she asked. His name, too, had slipped out.

"The Red Guard are coming."

"I know. Haven't we been reading about them on the wall newspapers and discussing them in our cell groups?"

"Yes, but something else has happened. Two days ago, I got a letter." He released his hold on her shoulders and found the letter in one of his pockets. She felt the evening's chill on the two warm spots where his hands had been.

The soiled envelope had evidently been picked up from the street and re-used; the address of a man in Peking had been crossed out and Fu-min's name written on. The letter itself appeared to be but a few words on a fly leaf torn from a book.

"It's from my younger brother, Chio-min. All it says is, 'When I get to Canton, help me.' "

Fu-min's home must be in the north, then. That was why he spoke such perfect Mandarin; it was his native language. He spoke good Cantonese, too, but she had wondered why he sometimes groped for words.

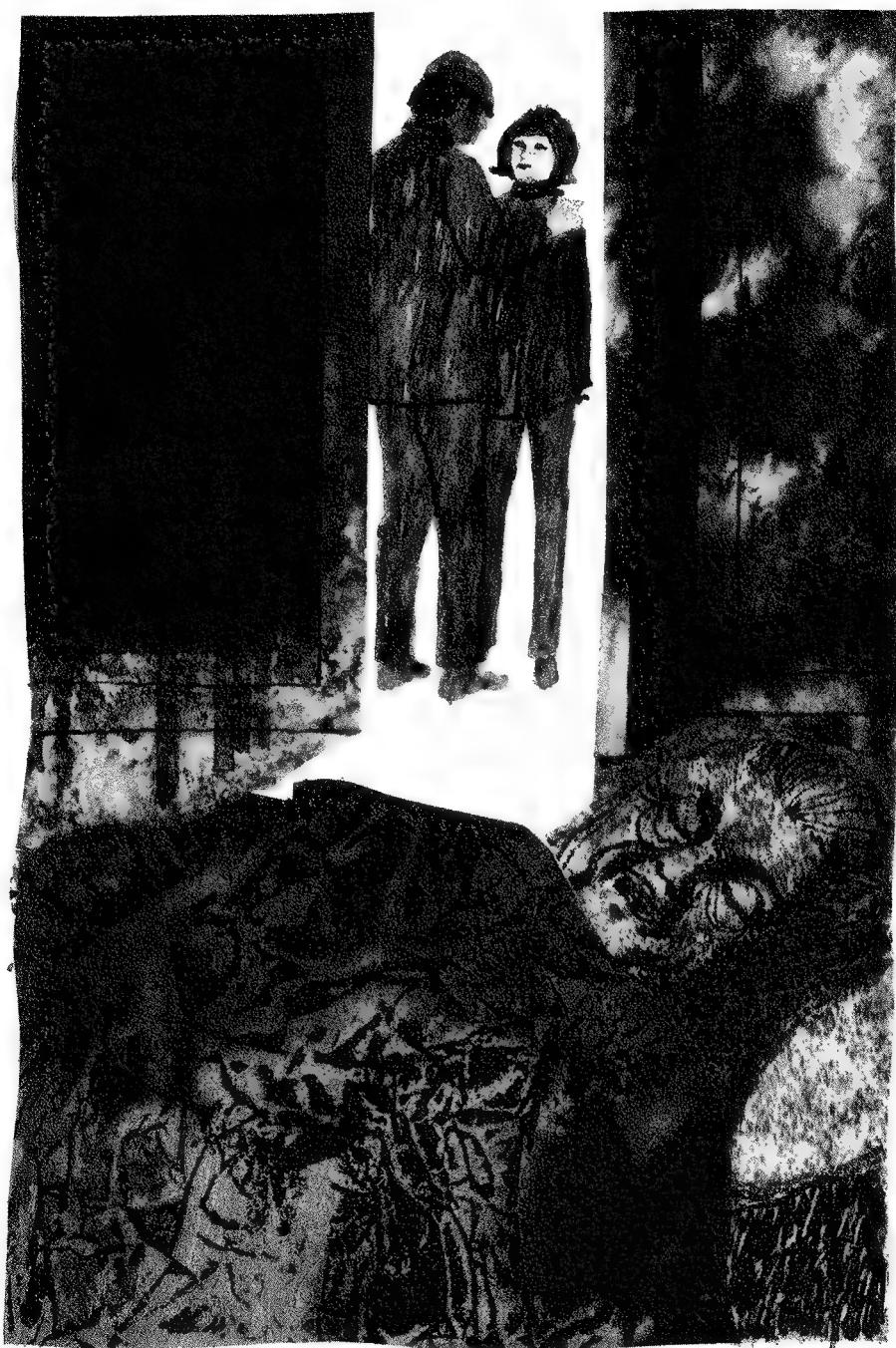
"You would understand my brother," Fu-min went on. "He must be fifteen or more by now. He's big, even a little taller than I am, but we're not alike in any other way. He's shy, awkward, a farmer from head to toe. He loves the land the way my father wishes I loved it. But I'm no farmer. I want to see progress. Everything you do on a farm has to be done over again in a few months."

He was telling her more than he ever had before.

"Do you like Canton?" she asked.

"Oh yes. I've heard about it all my life. My mother is Cantonese. She met my father when she was chosen to go to Peking to learn how to start cell groups. They were in the same class. That was a year and a half, at least, before Canton was liberated."

Ai-hua marveled again at how well her country had prepared for the revolution.



"I always wanted to see Canton," Fu-min went on. "I like to travel. To tell the truth, I couldn't get away from home fast enough. I tried to get my brother to come, too, but leaving the farm would've been torture to Chio-min. It must be torture to him now."

"Why? Boys his age like to do things together."

"Not Chio-min. He likes to be alone. He's always off in some corner of the field by himself. Says he has to think things out."

"Why did he leave home, then?" asked Ai-hua.

"I'm not sure," Fu-min replied. "He was in school in a town nearby and the whole student body may have left together, joining the main Red Guard groups after they left Peking to spread out over the country. The rest of his classmates may have pressured Chio-min into leaving with them. You know how kids are. Maybe they accused him of being unpatriotic, or made fun of him; maybe they shoved and pushed him along with them until he found himself on a train and it was too late to go back. I don't know what happened. But it would have taken a lot to get him as far away as the town on this postmark."

"The experience will do him good. Chairman Mao has called upon the young people to clear the country of the old thinking, the old customs, the old habits, the old culture. Your brother probably feels it his duty to take part in this Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

"You don't know Chio-min," he replied. "It's one thing to take part in bayonet practice in school—even the littlest kids like to play soldier—but it's another thing to see blood flow when that bayonet goes into somebody. Remember what Chairman Mao says: 'A revolution is not a dinner party.' "

Almost as a reflex, the two repeated the whole saying together, as they always did when they were present with their group members:

"A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous,

restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another."

"My brother *couldn't* take part in acts of violence," said Fu-min. "It isn't in him to hurt one living thing. That boy has only healing in his hands. Everything he touches grows, even wilted things. You won't believe this, but the wild animals don't struggle to get away from him when they're hurt. Sometimes it looks as if they actually come to him knowing he'll put a splint on a leg or bandage a wound."

He paused a moment, then went on. "Ai-hua, I have to say something in criticism, and though Chairman Mao has told us to 'Say all you know and say it without reserve' because 'the Communist Party does not fear criticism,' I'm going to ask you not to breathe a word to anyone."

"Since you have asked this, I will not; but you should speak out your criticism in our cell group."

"Believe me, Ai-hua, I know best. Trust my judgment and don't tell anyone."

"You know I will not," she assured him, but not without a pang of guilt.

Fu-min lowered his voice to a whisper. She could feel his warm breath on her ear. "I do not like the news of what the Red Guard are doing. I am in a position to get reports of their movements as they travel nearer to Canton. Some of these reports are . . . well, you wouldn't believe what these kids are doing."

This was a Fu-min she had never known. Could it be that he had leanings toward the beliefs of that Top Party Person? Surely he could not be a follower of that hated Liu Shao-ch'i. She thrust the unworthy thought from her mind.

"You must believe that Chairman Mao is right," she said. "The enemy without guns continues to exist even after the enemy with guns has collapsed."

"Of course he is right," said Fu-min. "Surely Chairman Mao knows whether or not we need a Cultural Revolution. But those

in the Red Guard are only children. Up to now, every minute of their lives has been regimented, every hour of the day planned for them, as it was for us. But now the lid is off. They can go any place they want to, ride the railroads free, insist upon food being given to them. Why, my father used to take great pride in the fact that wherever he went as a Communist soldier, the troops were never allowed to take food from the people."

"But good can come," said Ai-hua, searching in her mind for the loyal support she felt she should be giving to her beloved Chairman Mao. "These young people will see their country and love it all the more. When your brother returns to the farm, he'll be a better farmer; he will have seen the many mouths he must help to feed."

"This is no tourist trip, Ai-hua. I don't like mobs. Those who rise to the top are not always the cream. They're more apt to be the scum—the bullies. In this movement, there are some strong-handed gangs, and the young can be cruel. I don't want to frighten you, but if Chio-min has seen some of the things I've read in a few of the reports—if, sensitive as he is, he's been forced to take part in them, he'll be a mental case by the time he gets here. He's said he needs help."

"What can I do?" she asked. "I wouldn't know where to find help for the mentally ill."

"I didn't mean anything *that* bad, but Chio-min may need a place to hide," said Fu-min.

They were silent for a long time. What did Fu-min mean, really? Surely he didn't think that she and Grandmother could take a *man* into their two small rooms. And how could anyone hide in Canton? Fu-min certainly knew how competent the staffs of his and other police stations were. He was acting very strangely tonight. He had told her too much, and now he was asking her to keep a secret from Inspector Ch'en and the others.

Why should Chio-min need to hide in the first place? If he were weak and timid, or even mentally ill, it did not mean that

he had done wrong. Or was there more to the story than Fu-min was telling? Supposing his love for his brother had overcome his love for the state? That would be very wrong of Fu-min. Why, she remembered a classmate who had had to accuse a member of her own family publicly, and had bravely stood to watch him punished before her eyes. Ai-hua would not say that she could do this, or that Fu-min should do it now. Certainly not.

Why did her fears and her imagination always have to take her so far into every situation? Why should anyone have to accuse Chio-min, least of all Fu-min, who loved his brother? As far as anyone knew, Chio-min had done nothing wrong. All that Fu-min was keeping secret was his criticism of the Red Guard's methods. She felt a little weak with relief.

Then the full portent of her thoughts suddenly struck her. Could *she* love the state better than her own father? Supposing her father were still living, and that by the cruelty of some mob, he had broken mentally and physically; wouldn't she go to a friend and ask for advice? Wouldn't she try to find a quiet place for her father to rest until he was healed? Poor, poor Chio-min!

The picture of her brave classmate watching the cousin she had accused flashed into her mind with such terrifying force that she covered her face with her hands and groaned aloud.

"What is the matter, Ai-hua?" asked Fu-min. "Tell me; tell me."

How could she tell him that she, Ai-hua, had suddenly realized that she might have caused her own father's death? Had she, as a young child, in the flush of her patriotic fervor—had she been taught so well in school that she had, by something she'd said in criticism of her father, caused him to be arrested, accused and even led away to his death?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" she moaned.

Fu-min took her in his arms and she pushed him away. "What have I done?" he asked. "Have I frightened you by talking about the Red Guard?"

"No, it isn't that. It's just that . . . that I can't help you, Fu-min. I can't help anybody. I may have done a terrible thing."

"No you haven't, Ai-hua. You haven't done anything wrong. I shouldn't have asked you to help. I might have known that it would cause you anguish to do anything in secret. I'm sorry. I don't know what Chio-min means by needing help, but I wanted to be ready in case of any emergency. Forget all about it."

"You don't understand," said Ai-hua.

"I think I do," he replied. "It's this terrible pull inside you between your Christian background and your strong loyalty to all you believe as a Communist. I think I was hoping that this time your Christian compassion for one suffering individual would win out in the struggle. I knew there wasn't much anyone could do until we know more than we know now, but I needed someone understanding to talk to. I had no idea it would upset you so much."

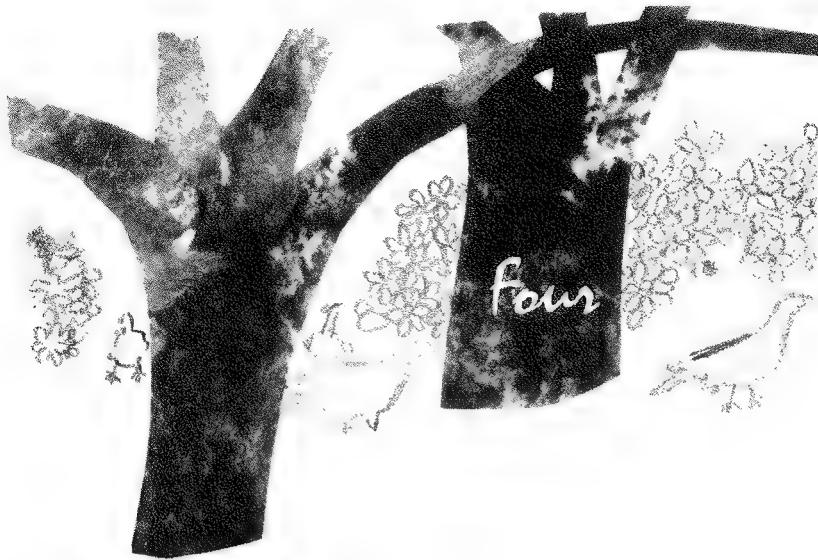
"I wish I could show such compassion," she said. "This has nothing to do with Chio-min, believe me. What we were saying led me to think of something else, something so staggering that it may change my whole life. I've got to find the answer to a question, Fu-min, and I'm afraid of what that answer will be."

"Can't I help you, Ai-hua?"

"No one can help me; not even God," she said.

Fu-min drew her hands away from her face. He looked at her for a long moment, then became very matter of fact as he said, "Don't let anyone else know of your Christian background. Remember, religion is part of the old thinking. If the Red Guard come, keep Grandmother out of sight. And if things get bad around here, you stay with her. Don't even come to work."

He disappeared into the shadows.



Grandmother, in deep sleep, was breathing heavily. Ai-hua got into bed and pulled the quilt around her but did not lie down. Was she the one, or even one of the ones, who had caused her father's death? She tried to go back to that last year they were together, when she was ten years old. She tried to be that child, in the hope that some wisp of memory would reassure her that she had had no part in her father's accusation.

Once more she was running out of school in the late afternoon, her father waiting at the gate to take her home. "I needed a walk anyway," he said, as usual. "I've been working too long at that sermon."

They both knew he was taking this opportunity to teach her more about the long history of China. He liked best to tell her stories of the T'ang Dynasty, "that most brilliant era," he called it. Her favorite story was the one about the princess who had to leave her home in China and become the wife of the King of Tibet. Though the princess was lonely for her homeland, she had gone willingly to help her country make peace with the Tibetan king.

"Some day you will help your country as the Princess Wen Ch'ing did," her father would say after each telling. "This is a new day in China. It could well be the golden age, and we Christians must strive to make it so. You will find a way to help, Ai-hua."

She could not tell her father that sometime during her few years at school, she had come to realize that she must not say she was a Christian—that to be a good Communist, she must not *be* a Christian; she must be like all the others in her class.

Grandmother was moaning and seemed to have difficulty in turning over, but when Ai-hua offered to help, she did not answer, apparently still asleep. When she finally settled into her usual snoring, Ai-hua could not recall the story her father had told her on this particular day of her memories. But it was surely one of the many that did not have the same ending or the same inner meaning as those she learned at school. The names of the people were the same, but somehow the story never turned out the way it did when her teacher told it.

When they got home that night, she had summoned the courage to ask her father which was the correct version—his stories or those she heard at school. She never got his reply, for Grandmother had broken in with a tirade against him.

"There! I told you the time would come. You have no right to do this to your child. What if every word written today is wrong in your eyes. . . ."

"Not every word, Mother; not every word. You know I believe in the great reforms of today, but history. . . ."

"History or not, do you think you are the one to decide what is to be taught to your child? Are you so naive? She is to be taught the Party line. She is to grow up to be a good Communist. I've told you a thousand times, it is the only safe way. Don't give her the terrible heritage of being half Christian and half Communist."

"She can be all Christian and all Communist," said her father.

"Don't be ridiculous," said Grandmother. "You know she can't. And all this talk is dangerous to you both. Someday in history class your daughter is going to say, 'But my father says that such and such is what *really* happened.' Then you'll find the police at your door."

"Our country is in a sad state when a father cannot teach his own daughter," she heard her father say as Grandmother took her off to bed.

"And don't say *that* out loud, either," Grandmother had shouted back.

She had not found the comfort she had hoped her memories might bring. All the fears came back to her—all the embarrassment of history class and her teacher saying before the others, "Ai-hua used to be better than any of you; now she is the worst in the class." How could she speak out when if she did, the police might take her father, as Grandmother had said? Now she wondered if she had ever made the mistake. Had she just once forgotten and said, "But my father knows the correct version"?

She would have to find out. She would begin by asking Grandmother to tell her everything about her father, beginning with his boyhood. If she could get her started, it might lead her on to revealing what had happened during the last days.

It was daylight when Ai-hua awoke, cramped and stiff from the uncomfortable position in which she found herself. It took a few minutes to recall why she was half sitting up and why she so dreaded to face the day. Then Fu-min's strange visit and the full storm of her thoughts poured over her. The blood mounted to her cheeks as she recalled the one pool of quiet in the thunder of waves pounding in her mind—his strong hands cupping her shoulders.

Grandmother was trying to get out of bed. "Come help me, child," she said weakly. Was she ill? Ai-hua hurried to her bedside. "Grandmother, are you all right?" she asked.

"Of course, I'm all right. I must have been lying the wrong way—pins and needles in my leg," she said. Her voice was thick and her face looked one-sided. Ai-hua was worried.

"Stay home today, Grandmother," she urged. "You aren't feeling well. Stay home just this once and rest."

But Grandmother was indignant. She insisted upon accompanying Ai-hua as usual and became very nervous and excited when it was suggested that they find a doctor. It took a long time to get to the police station. At the street vendor's, Grandmother spilled her gruel. "She's a sick woman," the street vendor whispered to Ai-hua. "Better get her to a doctor."

"She won't go," Ai-hua whispered back.

"Aiya! I know," said the woman.

All thought of questioning her grandmother about her father was erased from Ai-hua's mind. It was not until she reached the door of the police station that she realized she would have to come face to face with Fu-min. She dreaded going in, but she was already later than usual.

She needn't have worried. Fu-min acted as if nothing had happened. He came out to her desk, ostensibly to see if the mail had come, and greeted her with, "How is our good little Communist this morning?" knowing it would infuriate her. Was there a tinge of sarcasm in his voice? She couldn't be sure.

Choking back her rage, she forced herself to say, "I will bring you the mail when it comes, Comrade Li."

Had she been dreaming? Was last night's talk with him all her imagination? Or were such talks with girls a commonplace with him? He'd probably forgotten all about it by now. "I could beat his brains out," she said to herself, pounding her small fist. The box on the edge of the desk was jolted to the floor and the cards spilled in all directions. "And if he comes in here to help me, I'll throw the box at his head," she added.

Down on the floor, sorting and replacing the cards, she looked up to see him at the back door, dressed to go out. He was grinning like a monkey. "Probably saying to himself, 'It

was, of course, my fault for upsetting you so much.' " Well, this time he was right. It *was* his fault. The whole miserable mess was his fault. "I was so happy at my work here. Why, oh why, did he have to start me thinking?" She almost sobbed aloud in her exasperation.

But the spilled cards did some good. In the sorting, she came upon two cards with much the same information and two different names. They looked suspicious enough to pass on to Inspector Ch'en.

She went often to the window to see if Grandmother were all right. Most of the time she sat quietly on the bench, her back against the wall, sun on her face. When the inspector returned from lunch, he stopped at Ai-hua's desk. "Your grandmother is ill," he said. "I tried to get her to go home, but she would have none of it. I've persuaded her to lie down. Get the clean blanket from the emergency box in the back office and cover her with it. And leave for home a little early; she should be in bed."

"How kind of him!" thought Ai-hua. She thanked him, gave him the two cards and explained her suspicions.

"Comrade Wong, you have done us a great service," said the inspector, evidently pleased. "This is the key we've been looking for. And in our own files all the time! You are to be congratulated."

At least something nice was happening for a change. And she would leave early, hopefully before Fu-min got back.

She found the blanket in the emergency box in Fu-min's office. The old camphor-wood chest, now painted grey like the rest of the office furniture, had been pushed against the side of the file cabinets. In pulling the box out to open it, she had banged the files and a drawer had popped open. She stepped around to close it, and with her hand on the handle, suddenly thought, "All I would have to do is to pull this drawer open a little further; then I would know whether or not my father's file is here. Perhaps this drawer flew open for a reason. And it

would only take a few minutes longer to pull out each one and make a complete search."

At once the enormity of what she had almost done swept through her. "What has come over me?" she asked herself, banging the drawer shut. "I've never been like this before."

She hurried out to the courtyard with the blanket. Grandmother looked at her helplessly and said nothing.

For the rest of the afternoon, Ai-hua accomplished little. Fortunately, Inspector Ch'en was busy reading reports and only called her once. She was shocked at what she had been tempted to do. The files contained strictly guarded information. She had her orders; she knew that only the inspector and Fu-min had access to the files. Perhaps she should make a public confession in the cell group. She would lose her job, but she was not worthy of holding the job if she could not be trusted. Then she realized that she was not free to make that confession. Grandmother was ill and needed her. Just now, she could not afford to do anything that might take her away from Grandmother. Life could be so complicated.

She took out her little book and read what her great leader had said about criticism and self-criticism: "Correct mistakes if you have committed them and guard against them if you have not." She said the words over to herself, looking at the huge photo before her. Chairman Mao seemed to fill the room. His smile assured her that it was not too late. She would correct her mistake. She would certainly guard herself against the temptation of opening the secret files. She would never, never, never even think of such a thing again.

Inspector Ch'en rang for her. "You'd better take your grandmother home now. Fortunately, tomorrow is Sunday and you'll have the day off. By the way, have you noticed any confusion in her thinking? Does she say strange things?"

"No, sir," Ai-hua replied. "Her speech is thick and sometimes unintelligible, but her mind is clear."

"Let me know how she is on Monday, then."

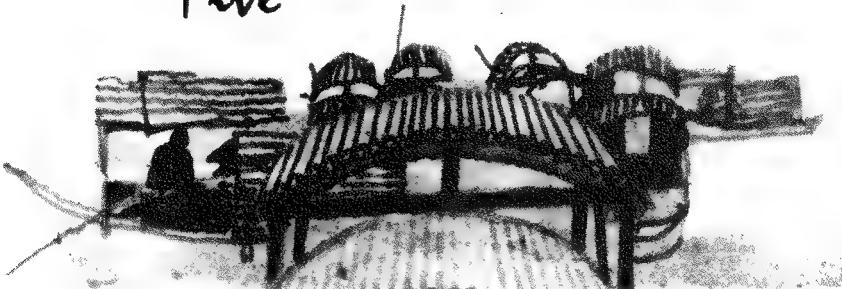


Did Grandmother have information she had not yet given the inspector? Was he concerned for fear she would disclose certain secrets? "Maybe I'm overly suspicious," she said to herself. "Inspector Ch'en is probably just being kind. Grandmother may be no more to him than the old lady who waits in the courtyard for her granddaughter."

The front door opened and Fu-min, his face crinkled with worry, hurried into the inspector's office and said, loudly enough for her to hear, "A Red Guard advance party has arrived in the north suburb."

Ai-hua cleared her desk at once and went out to take Grandmother home.

five



The streets were emptier than Ai-hua had ever seen them. No food vendors were in sight. The woman who sold combs, mirrors, pins and other useful sundries had evidently folded her kerchief of wares and left her pavement spot. Even the tea-house boat on the canal was deserted.

"Some . . . thing is going . . . to . . . happen," said Grandmother. It was an effort for her to get the words out.

"What do you mean?" asked Ai-hua.

"I . . . I . . . feel it."

Ai-hua felt it too. Even the wind had stopped blowing and seemed to be listening. What if Grandmother couldn't manage to get home? There wasn't a bicycle pedicab in sight. What if she fell, right here on the street? The shops were already boarded up as if it were night. There was no one around to call. Off in the distance she heard footsteps. Had the Red Guard come? "They would help me; I know they would," she told herself firmly. "They've been taught to help people. There may have been mobs in some cities, as Fu-min says, but it won't happen here in Canton."

Grandmother dropped her staff and leaned against Ai-hua heavily. She had all she could do to support her. The footsteps were coming closer and Ai-hua looked back frantically. Two men were hurrying forward as if to help; one was certainly Fu-min. Could the other one be his brother?

Running the last few steps, they took Grandmother from Ai-hua's arms, just as she felt she could hold her no longer. One on either side, they all but carried her along the street.

Fu-min introduced Chio-min, his brother. Grandmother, lost in her own difficult world, paid no attention. She groped for her staff and Ai-hua gave it to her, though she seemed to have trouble holding it. And one foot was dragging as she tried to walk.

"You are wondering how we happened to arrive just in time," said Fu-min. "Chio-min is one of an advance party, sent to find quarters for the Red Guard arriving tonight or tomorrow. You had already left the office when I took him in to meet Inspector Ch'en. When the inspector heard Chio-min's report, he began to worry about you and your grandmother getting home safely. He thought it would be a good idea for us to follow you to be on hand if you needed us."

Chio-min looked troubled. "Tell her the rest," he said.

"I was right about how Chio-min left home with the Red Guard in the first place," said Fu-min. "He did come out with his school. They soon joined other groups as they came south and the crowd got bigger and bigger. At first, activities went as planned and instructions were followed. And though Chio-min didn't particularly like the job, he took part in clearing out people's homes of the old books and old paintings that showed old ideas. They tore down useless churches and Buddhist and Confucian temples, and destroyed the old carvings."

Grandmother groaned and Chio-min patted her arm gently.

"Gradually one member of their crowd began to take over," Fu-min went on. "He went by the name of Ta Hung—Big Red. That guy is as mean as they come. The destruction got worse



and worse and no one dared to stand out against him. For some reason he took a dislike to Chio-min and it was devilish the way he took it out on him. Wherever they went and whatever they did, he was careful to make it look as if Chio-min had planned the whole thing. *He'd* just stand there and roll his eyes as innocent as a baby. Things really got pretty bad."

Chio-min shuddered, then drew up tall and took over the telling himself. "Several of the fellows from school knew my brother was with the police in Canton. They thought it would be a good idea if I came ahead with the advance party and reported Big Red to the police here. I agreed. They went to Big Red and told him that my brother would know where to get the best lodging and would have food on hand when all arrived."

"We'd already made our plans," said Fu-min. "There are a couple of empty churches and a warehouse further down the canal. We've got women to cook and stovcs set up. It's a good thing Big Red didn't know this, or you'd never have been able to get away from him, Chio-min."

"He may have guessed it; he certainly didn't want me to come. But the boys from school made it look as if he didn't have the interest of the group at heart if he didn't take advantage of this opportunity. So what could he say, especially when he'd made poor arrangements all along?"

"He probably knew very well that Chio-min would report him as soon as he got here, and that's just what he did."

"Weren't you afraid?" asked Ai-hua.

Chio-min only shrugged.

"He had reason to be," said Fu-min. "Big Red had warned him that if such a thing happened, he would search till he found Chio-min and kill him."

"He meant it, too," said Chio-min.

"Inspector Ch'en has ordered him kept out of sight entirely until the case has been thoroughly studied," said Fu-min. "We can easily manage at night because he can stay with me in the

barracks near the police station. We'll alert the others in the building. They know that old apartment house inside and out and they never let anyone they don't know get in from any direction. As an added precaution, I'll sleep with my cot across the door and whoever tries to open it had better look out."

"We've still got to decide what to do days," said Chio-min. "The barracks will be empty as soon as everyone has gone to work. Well, something will turn up."

Fu-min didn't even look across at Ai-hua, but she couldn't help thinking he would like her assistance in finding a place for Chio-min during the day.

Grandmother had been punctuating the conversation with moans. Once they had stopped for her to lie down on one of the stone benches by the side of the canal, but when they started out again, it was more difficult for her to move than ever. The four of them made slow progress as they walked along in silence, each thinking his own thoughts.

Ai-hua stole a glance at Chio-min. He was certainly good-looking. Fu-min was a little awkward as he tried to help Grandmother, but Chio-min knew just how to support her back and hold her so her weight was comfortably against him. Once he reached into his pocket for a clean handkerchief and wiped the mucus from her lips. He certainly did not look or act like a mental case—quite the contrary.

"I would like to help him, but how can I?" thought Ai-hua. Grandmother would have to have a doctor, there was no doubt about it. Ai-hua had all the trouble one small girl could manage. Still, she would like to be able to show Fu-min that her emotional upset the night before had had nothing to do with what he had been talking about; and she could do this by helping his brother. That was impossible now, with Grandmother so very ill.

"Here we are, Lao T'ai T'ai, home at last," said Fu-min, then whispered to Ai-hua, "As soon as we get her in bed, I'll go for a doctor."

"Go now," said Chio-min. "We two can manage her." He lifted the old lady in his arms and laid her on the bed as if she were a baby. Ai-hua covered her with the warmest quilt, lit the bean oil lamp, and went to make some tea. Fu-min had already gone for the doctor.

When Ai-hua returned with the tea, Chio-min had pulled up a chair by the side of the bed and was gently rubbing Grandmother's forehead. While Ai-hua held the cup, he propped another pillow behind her head and fed her the tea, spoonful by spoonful.

"Good . . . good," said Grandmother, trying to smile up at them.

It frightened Ai-hua to see her accept these ministrations without the struggle she usually made to help herself. Ai-hua had never seen her like this before. All the spunk had gone out of her. "She must be very, very sick," said Ai-hua softly. "Why doesn't Fu-min come with the doctor?"

"There may be no doctors who live nearby," said Chio-min, taking the extra pillow from Grandmother's head and easing her down. As the minutes and then an hour passed, Grandmother fell into a deep sleep.

Or was it a coma? Ai-hua did not dare to ask Chio-min. She tucked the cover around Grandmother's shoulders once more, then brought a low stool from across the room and placed it where she could see the old lady's face in the lamplight. Ai-hua's whole life had suddenly changed and she would have to think things out.

What would she do if Grandmother should . . . ? She pushed the thought from her mind. The immediate problem was how Grandmother was to be cared for during this illness, and that would have to be settled by Monday. Ai-hua would have to continue working in order to support them, and now she would also have to pay for someone to look after Grandmother during the day while she was at work. She might be able to get Grandmother's friend, the woman who lived on the

third floor of the apartment house. No, that woman was working now and so were all the others living in the building. One of the older children, perhaps? They were in school. The street vendor who sold them their breakfasts? She would make more money selling her wares than Ai-hua could afford to pay.

She could see now that Grandmother should have gone into the Old Ladies' Home. There she would have been well looked after at no expense and the Home would have been ready to meet this emergency, with a doctor easily available. But Grandmother had seemed so well, and it would have broken her heart to leave this little house. She would have thought Ai-hua didn't want her around any more.

"Chio-min," she whispered. "Will it be long?"

"Will what be long?" He had been lost in his own thoughts.

"Grandmother's illness. Will it take long for her to get well?"

"Comrade Wong, I don't know. I really don't know. What will you do?"

"I could stay at home for a day or two, but the work in the office has to be done. There's no one else to do it. I might be able to plan better if I knew how long she would have to be in bed. Why doesn't Fu-min come?"

"He'll be here soon. The doctor will help you plan. He may know a nurse who does this sort of thing. Or he may think she should be in a hospital."

"Not a hospital! Oh, Chio-min, not a hospital!"

"Hospitals are *good* places to be. Our whole family used to feel the way you do until Mother got sick and had to have an operation. When we saw how quickly she got well and how efficient the nurses were, we were glad we'd taken her there. I even wanted to be a doctor myself."

He hunched his chair nearer hers. "I've been sitting here thinking, Comrade Wong. I've got to talk this out with someone since I can't be out in the fields to work it through. Do you mind if I ask you a question?"

"No," she replied, her mind on her own problems.

"If I went back home now and failed to do my duty to this Cultural Revolution, would you consider me a coward—a failure?"

"Is it so hard for you to be away from home, Chio-min? Can't you even work for the Revolution for these next few months? Or is there more you aren't telling me? Is there something important calling you home?"

"Yes, but that isn't the point. You haven't answered my question."

"Chio-min, I can't answer your question. The world is so full of trouble, when it could be the Golden Age of China's history, as my father used to say."

"Your father? Tell me more of what he said. Tell me more about the Golden Age."

"Never mind about my father." She was shocked that she had mentioned him. Fu-min had warned her not to let anyone know of her background. What would he and his brother say if they knew *all* she'd been thinking? What if she had said aloud, "When things troubled me as a child, my father would say, 'Let's pray about this, small daughter. God will know what is best to do?' Suppose she had admitted that after they had prayed she always felt better and that eventually she *would* know how to meet her problem? Worse, suppose she had blurted out that she missed those times of kneeling beside her father at the old worn chair where he read his Bible and prepared his sermons. Suppose she had cried out, "I want to go away alone right now and find a place where I can ask God to help me."

Chio-min suddenly raised his head as if he were listening to something outside. Ai-hua pulled herself together. This would never do. What was Chio-min hearing? Certainly not the footsteps of the doctor and Fu-min. The wind had come up, a roaring wind. That was it. Or was it the roaring of a crowd in the distance? A rally, perhaps. "Someone is shooting off firecrackers," she said.

"Not firecrackers. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has reached Canton, Comrade Wong. The crackling sound is the breaking of old timbers in a burning building." He was shivering. Had the sound brought back recent experiences? Or was he shaking with fear that he might meet Big Red? She quickly made some more hot tea and brought it to him.

Where was Fu-min? If he couldn't find the doctor, he could at least come back and tell them so. Grandmother was getting restless again.

At long last, Fu-min arrived with a fine-looking elderly gentleman, Dr. Chao. They were both disheveled and out of breath, as if they'd been running, and the sleeve of the doctor's coat was torn.

"So this is our patient," said Dr. Chao, going at once to the bedside. "Now, Mrs. Wong, let's have a look at you."

Ai-hua had expected her grandmother would be angry that she had called a doctor without first asking her consent. But Grandmother accepted the careful examination without a word. Strange, that the doctor had not brought his bag. "Nature has given us the best stethoscope available," he said, listening to Grandmother's heart by placing his ear to her chest. "I won't even miss my old one." What did he mean by that?

The examination over, Dr. Chao asked for a basin of water, washed his hands and sat down in the chair beside Grandmother's bed. "Has her mind been confused at times?" he asked Ai-hua, being careful not to let Grandmother hear his question.

"No, not really."

"It may become so, but do not worry."

Grandmother watched him intently as he went on with his questioning. At last he was satisfied. Then he addressed his remarks to the old lady. "I will tell you frankly what has happened. I find that patients respond to treatment better when they know exactly where they stand, though I cannot speak to all my patients as frankly as I'm speaking with you.

"Thank . . . you, Doctor," she said, thickly.

"You have had a stroke. At the moment your right leg is paralyzed, your right arm partially so. The drooping of the eyelid and the left side of the face is caused by the same hemorrhage into the brain. Within the next few weeks, we will know whether or not your limbs will return to normal. I'll try to get back tomorrow to outline a course of treatment and to tell you what you must do for yourself, Mrs. Wong. A lot depends on how well you follow instructions. This will take courage, but you are a courageous woman. I know we can depend on you. Do you understand?"

Grandmother gave a most surprising answer. Reaching for Chio-min's hand, she said, "My . . . my grandson . . . will take good . . . good care of me."



"I told you your grandmother might become confused," the doctor whispered to Ai-hua. "She thinks this boy is her grandson." He was not prepared to see the sudden change in the faces of the three young people. It was as if some great problem had been solved and they had all discovered the solution at the same moment. "Isn't this Comrade Li's brother? Or are you three related?"

Ai-hua smiled for the first time that night. "No, we are not related," she said. "It's just that, well. . . ."

"We've found a person to take care of Grandmother during the day while Comrade Wong works," said Chio-min.

"It looks as if Grandmother had found the grandson she's been looking for all these years," said Fu-min, "and just when she needs him the most."

"You all look very happy about it," said the doctor. "Well, I must be going." He reached for the bag that was not there, then dropped his hands helplessly. "We left home rather hurriedly," he said. "I wanted to give Mrs. Wong something to help her sleep, but I've brought nothing with me."

"Grandmother has a tin box full of her own remedies," said Ai-hua. "Shall I get it?"

"Do, please," he replied.

The doctor smiled as he looked over the plasters, the large pills made up like balls, and the herbs wrapped in yellowing papers. Opening one packet, he rubbed the herbs between his fingers, then smelled them. "This will do very well," he said. "Mrs. Wong, you have chosen wisely. I suppose I'll be using a lot of these grass medicines from now on. I'll have to come to you for pharmacy lessons." He handed the packet to Ai-hua. "Make this into an infusion as you would make strong tea," he told her. "Good-night, Mrs. Wong, and good-night to your grandchildren."

"Where will you go?" asked Fu-min, taking the doctor aside.

"I have a sister-in-law who lives a few blocks from here," Doctor Chao replied. "Fortunately, I sent my wife there earlier in the day. I'll spend the night with them and decide what to do in the morning."

"I'd better go with you," said Fu-min. "I'll be back for you later, Chio-min."

"There's not much left of the night; I'll stay here," he said. "I can doze in Grandmother's cane chair. I've got to get used to being a grandson."

Ai-hua, preparing Grandmother's medicine, smiled. "He's doing very well," she thought. "He even knows which chair is Grandmother's."

"Good idea to be on hand if you're needed," Fu-min said to his brother. "See you in the morning. At least, we have Sunday off and can begin to get things organized."

Oh, it was good to have someone else taking the responsibility. Ai-hua felt almost as if she *had* prayed and there *was* a God who had helped to solve her problems.

Grandmother was a little better next morning and seemed to enjoy having the young people near her. But the doctor did not appear. Fu-min said he would explain later. It was all very

mysterious about this doctor. Where had he left his bag? Why was his sleeve torn? And why had he not returned? It was Monday evening before she heard the story.

The police station had been busier than ever that day. The staff of policemen were in and out, asking for addresses from Ai-hua's card file to check with their own, stopping for no more than a sip of tea from the huge pot she had made for them.

Fu-min had been behind the high front counter most of the day, answering questions of old and young, giving directions to the young men wearing the red arm bands of the Red Guard, questioning householders who arrived to complain of loss of property. He had to smile at their attempts to make it abundantly clear that they were *not* contaminated by the old ideas, thoughts and culture and never had been. They and many others had been taken into the back room for serious questioning.

By closing time, the other policemen were still scattered throughout the precinct. Inspector Ch'en, looking very worried, rushed from his office for one more meeting. "Lock the front of the building now," he told Fu-min. "You all have your keys to the back door."

Something was troubling the inspector. He hadn't even asked how Grandmother was. And he had gone without saying good-night.

"I'll walk home with you," Fu-min said to Ai-hua. "I want to show Chio-min a better way to our place than the way I took him last night so that he won't have to go through the main streets. Big Red has his boys out searching for him. A few of them came into the police station this morning. Did you notice them trying to look around without appearing to be doing it? Those guys need a course from Inspector Ch'en."

Would they meet the Red Guard? Although Ai-hua assured herself that she would be perfectly safe, she couldn't help being a little uneasy, especially after what she'd heard during the day. Fu-min had not exaggerated when he told her what

some of those boys had been doing. But the streets in their part of town were deserted and as they walked along, their footsteps echoed softly against the boarded-up store fronts, looking curiously gay with large-character posters pasted all over them.

"Where *are* these boys of the Red Guard?" asked Ai-hua. "We haven't met one of them."

"Right now, they're probably eating their evening meal. Boy, are those kids hungry! They can clean up more food than the whole Liberation Army. By the way, how did your grandmother get through the night? Or should I say our grandmother? I meant to ask you earlier."

"She said she slept very well. *I* certainly did. I was ashamed to leave all the work of getting her settled for the night to Chio-min, but I just couldn't lift her. And he was there this morning before she began to stir. I don't know what we would have done without him. He lifts Grandmother so easily. She frets if I try to touch her, and keeps insisting that she wants only her grandson to help her. I know her mind is confused but I feel sort of left out in the cold."

"We had the doctor confused for a while, didn't we? He even thought you and I were relatives." They walked along in silence until Fu-min added, "Stranger things have happened, Ai-hua. Who knows? We may be related some day."

She did not ask what he meant; she was having a hard enough time to keep the red out of her cheeks as it was. Instead she asked the question she'd been wanting to ask all day. "What happened Saturday night? It seemed as if years passed before you and the doctor returned. When you did come, Dr. Chao's sleeve was torn and he didn't bring his bag."

"I didn't want to upset Grandmother nor take the time to explain then, and I'd rather not tell you now," he replied, "but I might as well. You certainly know something is going on in this city. Here's what happened:

"When I finally found the doctor's house, it was completely

surrounded by the Red Guard. I listened to what they were saying and learned that the doctor had been in America for a year to study his medical specialty. So, of course, his office and house had to be purged. The boys were removing all his instruments, books, and so forth, and were building a fire of them out front."

Ai-hua wanted to ask why he had gone for a doctor who'd been tainted by Imperialists, but she knew Fu-min had done the best he could under the circumstances.

"I wanted to find the doctor and get him out, not because I thought he was innocent, but because we needed help," Fu-min went on, sensing her thoughts. "So I pretended I was one of the Red Guard and carried out the stuff with them. I even found a drawer full of diplomas the others had missed, and burned them. Why in the name of heaven he hadn't got rid of them before, I don't know."

Fu-min had gone through the house and office several times without finding the doctor. "I never thought of looking in the back kitchen, but there he was, making up a fire to boil some tea. I only had time to whisper, 'Stay here. I need you in another part of the city,' before another group broke down the back door and came pouring past us into the house."

It hadn't taken Fu-min long to realize that the new group was led by Big Red. From the time of his arrival, the destruction got worse and worse. Even the floor boards and door frames were being ripped out and fed to the flames.

"The smoke was thick," said Fu-min, "and I could hear the fire crackling louder and louder so I knew something had to be done quickly. Then I got an idea. You know the Cantonese Red Guard resent having those from the north come down here to do their job. I could see they didn't like Big Red's taking over the leadership, either."

Fu-min's next move was to run through the crowd and round up several of the Cantonese boys he recognized. They were more than willing to help. "I simply told them I'd been ordered to

take the doctor to the police station," said Fu-min. "We tried to find a way out the back, but there was none, so we told the doctor to keep down and we formed a cordon around him, and tore out through the crowd to the street. We were all shouting, 'Long live Chairman Mao Tse-tung,' and 'Down with Liu Shao-ch'i.' Everyone took up the shouting and this diverted them from paying attention to us."

"Then what?" asked Ai-hua, breathlessly.

"Well, just as we were leaving, Big Red saw us and grabbed the doctor. That's how he got his jacket torn. I had to think fast. 'Let go of him,' I yelled. 'He's mine. I'm the one to see he gets what he deserves. He killed my father with his old foreign instruments and he's mine now. You keep your hands off him.' Big Red didn't want to give up. I had to kick him in the knees to make him fall down long enough for me to pull the doctor away and dive through the crowd. I never did find my Cantonese boys again."

Ai-hua said nothing. Fu-min had been brave; he had risked his life to help Grandmother. But had he done wrong in saving the doctor? Dr. Chao was guilty, there was no doubt about it. Suddenly she realized that Fu-min had destroyed the proof of his guilt by burning the doctor's diplomas. Again she wondered if Fu-min could possibly believe in the ideas of that capitalist, Liu Shao-ch'i. Fu-min had shouted the slogan against him, but he had lied about other things, too. He had told that awful story about the doctor's killing his father, and he had lied about his order to take the doctor to the police station.

But the alternative? To leave that wonderful, kind man to the mercy of Big Red and his gang, or to be trapped in the flames of his burning house?

"I can't help being glad you got the doctor out," she said, "but. . . ."

"Of course you're glad," he interrupted. "It's just as I said, you always think first of the individual."

"I thought first of the state," she replied, tartly. "Even be-



fore I spoke, I was thinking about what was right and what was decidedly not right. It was you who thought first of the doctor, Fu-min. Or was it Grandmother you thought of first?"

"A man in my job learns to do what he has to do the minute it happens. He has no time for thinking thoughts."

There was no change for the better in Grandmother's condition as the days went by. Her paralysis did not improve. Her mind became more and more confused. At brief intervals she did not seem to know who Ai-hua was. The doctor had returned on Tuesday to leave his instructions and had said, then, there was nothing he could do. They had not seen him since.

Fu-min walked home with Ai-hua every night. Life in the city became more and more disrupted. Often Fu-min had to find a back alley for them to use. Apparently he had scouted the area thoroughly and knew where trouble might be expected. So far they hadn't run into any disturbances.

Work at the police station was busier than ever. She and Fu-min were so tired at night that they made a pact not to speak of their work on the way home. Fu-min eased things for Ai-hua by taking all their ration books and getting the food, which Ai-hua cooked for the four of them, each sharing the expenses.

It was difficult to get Grandmother to eat. Her many friends from the apartment house would bring in special dishes that she would taste to please them. And she would take a little thin rice gruel when Chio-min fed it to her. Her friends seemed to accept that the two boys were relatives and it was easier to let them believe what Grandmother had told them than to try to explain.

After the evening meal had been cleared away, the three would stand, facing the photo of Chairman Mao, and read his thoughts aloud together. Then Fu-min would take out his flute and Chio-min his homemade Hu Ch'in fiddle and as they played, Ai-hua would sing, the boys often stopping to join in. They sang, of course, "The East in Red Glow":

*From the red east rises the sun,
In China appears Mao Tse-tung,
He works for the people's welfare. Hu erh hai yo!
He is the people's great saviour.*

*Chairman Mao loves the people,
He is our guide.*

*He leads us onward—hu erh hai yo—
To build up New China.*

*The Communist Party is like the sun.
Wherever it shines, there is light,
Where the Communist Party goes—hu erh hai yo!—
There the people are liberated.*

And one of the three always asked for “We Workers Have Strength”:

*We the workers have great strength.
Hai! We the workers have great strength.
We're busy working every day.
Hai! Busy working every day.
We put up tall buildings,
Dig mines and build railways,
And we have altered the face of the earth.
Ai-hai! Machines are started,
Hu-lung-lung, they sound.
We swing our hammers, they ring ding dong.
We make the ploughs that till the land,
And weapons for our country's defense.
Ai-hai! Ai-hai Ai-ya!
Every face is flushed and red.
Every brow is wet with sweat.
Why do we work? For freedom's sake.
Why do we work? To liberate all.
Ai-hai! Ai-hai!
Our work will liberate our entire great land.*

Grandmother seemed to enjoy the music, especially when the boys came out strong with the "Ai-hai's" and the "Hu-lung-lung." But she said very little. Chio-min could usually sense when she was too tired to hear more. He would put away his instrument and give the old lady her last back rub of the day while Fu-min played softly, piping a haunting melody that became a lullaby as Grandmother dozed off. "I don't know why it makes her sleep," said Fu-min, "unless it's because I still feel sleepy when I play it. It's one I used to pipe when I was a child and had to sit in the tent over the melon field all night to scare the foxes away."

As soon as it was dark, the boys would put on their disguises —large straw coolie hats, and black scarves tied around their waists. They would amuse Ai-hua, and Grandmother if she were still awake, by talking to each other in a north country dialect, acting like old farmers. Then off they would go into the night, leaving the house quiet except for Grandmother's fretful murmurs. Ai-hua knew the old lady was worrying for fear something would happen to her "grandson."

She, too, felt lonely when the boys were gone. "When they're here, it's just like being a real family," she said to herself. But it was impossible to think of Fu-min as a brother. Her cheeks bloomed with pink peonies at the thought of another role he might play.



One Sunday, Fu-min had to go off with Inspector Ch'en on a special assignment. Ai-hua and Chio-min were giving Grandmother her morning care. While Chio-min turned Grandmother on her side and held her, Ai-hua changed the sheets and pillow case. Chio-min had taught her how to do it—"the way nurses make beds in hospitals," he had said. "I used to watch them when my mother had her operation."

Usually he hummed a tune, or whistled, or told another story about someone in his village. Today he said nothing. When Grandmother dropped off to sleep for her morning nap, the two went into the courtyard to sit in the sun. They were quiet for a few minutes, then Chio-min drew a long sigh. "It might be easier if Sunday never came," he said.

"Why? What's wrong with Sunday? Something is troubling you," said Ai-hua.

"Let's not talk about it."

"You must be terribly bored with this kind of life when you are used to being in the fields under the sky all day."

"I miss the sky," he said, squinting up at the small patch

visible between the buildings, "but I'm not bored. I've always liked taking care of sick people and animals. At home, I'm nurse and farmer both, so this is nothing new for me. But you're right, I *do* miss the sky and the wind and the rain, and above all, the earth—soil between my fingers, and . . . well, we weren't going to talk about it."

"I do wish you were free to come and go here as you please. How much longer does Inspector Ch'en think you'll have to be in hiding?"

"He hasn't said. But I'm not afraid any more. Grandmother and I talked a lot when she spoke more than she does now. She told me all about myself—things I should have known but didn't. She's helped me more than I can ever help her. When she doesn't need me any longer. . . ." He hastily corrected himself, "When she's well again, I'll find Big Red and tell him some things he needs to be told."

They were both silent for a long time. Ai-hua wanted to say something to lift his burden. "Tell me about your village," she finally ventured. "Describe it to me."

He edged forward on his stool, as he always did when he had a story he particularly wanted to tell.

"I wish I could take you and Grandmother to see Seven Mile Village. She's heard all there is to hear about it. Try to see a fertile valley between low, brush-covered hills, a small stream running through it, and before you our large communal field spreading out over the wide valley floor. You're standing on a low plateau where our village is located—mud-brick houses for about a hundred and eighty of us. You wouldn't be interested in hearing about the crops and all that."

"Of course I would. I've never been out of this city. I don't know a thing about farming. Tell me everything."

"We plant wheat and kao liang corn and of course, millet and melons. I wish you could taste one of our melons fresh from the vines. Makes my mouth water just to think of them."

"And of course you plant rice," said Ai-hua.

Chio-min laughed. He was coming out of his doldrums. "No, my dear little girl, we of the north do *not* eat rice. Only you barbarian southerners eat rice. We can't 'eat full' on rice."

"Why, we think the same thing about wheat," said Ai-hua. "If we can't have our rice, we 'ch'ih pu pao'—'eat not full,' as you savages from the north would say."

"We eat more millet than anything else, but wheat is planted in the big communal fields. Wheat brings in the best money, so we sell most of it and save a little for special occasions."

"And you must have fish in your stream; we couldn't live without fish."

"So I notice. Our stream is much too small for fish. You *are* a city girl. I had no idea your education had been so sadly neglected."

He was having such a good time that she did not remind him that he was only fifteen—three years younger than she.

"No fish, Ai-hua. No fish at all, and we don't miss it a bit. We eat goat when we have meat, which isn't very often."

"Goat!" She wrinkled her nose in disgust.

"What's wrong with goat? You probably don't know how to cook it, that's all. My mother could teach you how."

What would it be like to have a mother? Ai-hua wondered, as Chio-min went on about plowing and seed and yield per acre. Imagine having a mother to laugh with you and teach you to cook, a mother to listen when you needed to talk and to tell you the answers to your problems. Why, a mother would know all about your father. She could tell you why he had been taken away, and. . . ."

"You're not listening," said Chio-min. "I knew this would bore you."

"I was too listening. You were just saying, 'And on Sundays, we. . . .'"

"On Sundays, all the people who have plots come out from town and. . . ."

"What do you mean, 'who have plots'?"

"I knew you weren't listening. I'll bet you didn't hear a thing about each family having its own small plot of ground where we raise our own vegetables and plant whatever we want to. The whole village works the big field—men and women together. Sometimes I think the women work harder than the men."

"Naturally. Tell me again what happens on Sundays."

"On Sundays, all the people come out from town. You see, we can't use tractors on the hillside and the ground there isn't particularly good for wheat anyway—that's where we have our vegetable gardens. But there's still room left, so we allow some of the civil workers from the city to clear land and plant vegetables to take home for themselves. They come out Sundays to work their plots. The whole hillside looks as if it had been planted with huge flowers—the women's colored kerchiefs and the children's blouses and jackets. You'd love it."

"That's why you said Sunday was a hard day for you here. I'm so sorry. It must be like a festival in your village. Just think of it, a festival every Sunday!"

"More like a huge picnic. Everyone brings food—our women bring ours out to the fields from our homes—and we all sit down together. And after the food, the townspeople tell us what's going on in the city, and teach us the new songs. Of course, we get them over the radio, too. They like to sing some of our old songs, and we all like to sing 'The Sun Does Not Set on the Grasslands.' Wait a minute, I'll get my fiddle and sing it for you."

"My father would have loved Chio-min," Ai-hua thought, as he disappeared into the house. "Chio-min makes it sound as if the Golden Age had already arrived."

"Was Grandmother all right?" she asked, when he returned.

"Sleeping like a baby," he replied. "Will my singing wake her up?"

"I don't think so."

"I'll keep my voice down. The song goes like this:

*"White clouds cross the sky so blue,
Horses gallop fast and free,
Loudly rings the herdsman's whip
And flocks of birds fly away.*

*"Should a stranger ask of me:
What is this fine open place?
Proudly I would answer him:
This is my own native land.*

*"We that live here all love peace,
All love our own native land.
Joyful we sing our good new life,
Sing of Kung Ch'an Tang.**

*"Chairman Mao and Kung Ch'an Tang,
In your light we grow.
The life-giving sun
Does not set on the grasslands.
The life-giving sun
Does not set on the grasslands."*

He broke off abruptly, leaned forward and said, "Ai-hua, do you realize that the harvest is ready and there aren't any of us younger men at home to bring it in? Then the fields have to be prepared and the next crop planted. I ought to be home. We all ought to be in the fields right now."

"But there is important work for you to do here," she urged. "I don't mean taking care of Grandmother, but this Cultural Revolution. Only you young men can do it. As soon as Inspector Ch'en finishes his study of your case, you'll be back at your most important work."

"You don't understand," said Chio-min. "Right now, nothing is more important than getting in that grain. I've seen more of China than I ever knew existed. Now I see with my own eyes how many mouths there are to feed, and I see as I never saw before how important it is for us to do a good job of raising

* The Communist Party.

food to feed all these people. Why, their lives depend on us farmers."

"I'm sure something will work out."

"*What will work out? What will happen to all these people if the crops are not brought in? We had every promise of a good harvest when I left. We can't lose this badly-needed food.*"

"It won't be lost, Chio-min. You said the women were good workers. Won't they bring in the grains?"

"They work with us always. Everyone works during the harvest; every person is needed. And here I sit, playing a fiddle. Ai-hua, there's so much we need to do in our village. We want to buy our own tractor; now we have to rent one from town. And we need a lorry, which we plan to get when the tractor is paid for. If this good harvest is lost, it will set our plans back a year, probably more—to say nothing of people starving. And it isn't only in our village; the harvest is ready all over the north."

Ai-hua quoted Chairman Mao as the only comfort she knew to give him. "'In times of difficulty, we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up courage.'"

Instinctively, they reached into their pockets for their little red books, realizing that so far this morning, they had not taken time for their usual reading session. When they had finished, Chio-min picked up his fiddle again and played the last few measures of the song he had just sung:

"*The life-giving sun
Does not set on the grasslands.*"

But the plaintive high note on which it ended, brought little comfort to either of them.

Ai-hua sat still, trying to figure out some way that other help could be obtained so that Chio-min would be free to leave at any time. But the river she could not cross was how to confront Grandmother with the loss of her "grandson."



Chio-min edged his stool closer to Ai-hua's bench. He watched her sitting there, head against the wall, face to the sun. "Ai-hua," he said.

"Yes?" She was still looking at the patch of sky.

"Have you ever thought of . . . have you ever thought it might be fun to . . . ?"

His hesitation made her turn to him. "To what, Chio-min?"

"To leave the crowded city and go north? To spend the rest of your life . . . on a farm?"

His face was flushed and he was far too agitated for so simple a question.

Ai-hua didn't know how to answer. "Sometimes, when I'm in the park listening to the wind through the trees and seeing that wide stretch of sky, I wonder what it would be like to live outside Canton. But go north? No, Chio-min, I can't imagine ever wanting to live anywhere except here; perhaps in the apartment house next door, where we could have electricity and other conveniences, but not in any other town. This is *my* city and I love it. I don't think I could live anywhere else."

"Not even if you . . . married someone from the north?"

What was this boy getting at? "I'm afraid Grandmother would never allow me to marry a northerner," she said. "I'm sorry, Chio-min, but you and I both know how southerners feel about northerners and how you people feel about us. And you know Grandmother. When she gets an idea, nothing can change her."

"My father married a southerner. Nobody has to marry the one chosen by parents anymore, Ai-hua. Those days are over; you know that. The two people concerned agree and that's all that's necessary."

"What is on your mind, Chio-min? Am I just a 'for instance' case? Have you met a girl here in Canton and you want to see how she might react? You're much too young to be thinking of marriage. Look at all you have to do back in your village. And you may be leaving soon. Don't hurry into anything now. Why

not wait until you get home and see what you think of a girl you've known a long time? Or am I wrong and there is something else troubling you?"

"Just forget I asked those questions. The *harvest* is troubling me; that's all. But that's enough." The full weight of his problem had fallen upon him once more.

"Talk it over with Fu-min," said Ai-hua. "Perhaps he will see the inspector and ask if it would be a good idea for you to return home long enough to bring in the harvest. Then you could come back and take part in the Cultural Revolution."

"I can't go now anyway," he said. Picking up his fiddle, he started for the house.

"He feels bound to stay with Grandmother," thought Ai-hua. "We have no right to expect this much of a total stranger, well, almost a total stranger."

"Ai-hua! Ai-hua! Come quickly!" It was Chio-min's voice from inside.

A terrible fear gripped her as she ran into the house, moving as in a nightmare, as if weighted by lead. Chio-min was standing by the bed, one hand on Grandmother's pulse, the other feeling the cold of the now-unwrinkled forehead. "She is dead," he whispered.

"Stop!" screamed Ai-hua. "She is *not* dead. Don't say it!" She shook the lifeless shoulders, pinched the limp cheeks, tried to lift the eyelids, shouting, "Grandmother, Grandmother, wake up. Chio-min, make her wake up. She couldn't die like this. She wouldn't leave me without saying *anything*, without even saying good-bye!"

The tears were streaming down Chio-min's face as he took Ai-hua in his arms and tried to comfort her. But she pushed him away and knelt beside the bed, moaning, "Grandmother, can you hear me? Wake up, Grandmother, wake up. I have to know. I have to know about my father. Don't go. Don't go, Grandmother, please don't go without telling me about my father, *please*. . . ."

Ai-hua's first scream had brought people from the apartment house. Mrs. Feng, Grandmother's friend from the third floor, was the first to arrive. Though she knew Grandmother was very ill, she was shocked to find her friend lying so still and Ai-hua beside herself with grief. She and Chio-min had to force Ai-hua to leave the bedside so that necessary preparations could be made.

Out in the courtyard, Ai-hua was quiet at last. She shivered and Mrs. Feng took off her sweater and threw it around the girl's shoulders. Ai-hua said one more sentence, "*Please* get Fu-min. He will be able to make Grandmother wake up." Then she lapsed into silence. It was as if she, too, had left her body and gone on a long journey, leaving behind this stone image of the person she once had been.

Eight



And like stone, Ai-hua went through the funeral ceremonies, doing whatever Mrs. Feng told her to do. Only once did she seem to notice what was happening. She glanced down at the piece of torn white cotton Mrs. Feng was tying around her waist. "Your grandmother would be ashamed of this," said Mrs. Feng, and sighed.

"I know," Ai-hua replied. They both knew there was no cloth available in any of the shops for the usual white cotton robes of mourning.

Long ago, all plans for the funeral had been made by Grandmother and had been listened to, dutifully, by Ai-hua. The man who cleaned their street, and who had once been a Taoist priest was to perform the rites. Paper money, gifts from Grandmother's friends, would be burned in profusion; paper effigies of servants, utensils, furniture—everything that Grandmother might possibly need in the spirit world would be wafted there from the little fires of paper burning outside their door.

Such was not to be. There would be a simple cremation and that would be all. No evidence of these old customs could ap-

pear in the streets because of the Red Guard. The Taoist priest was nowhere to be found. But Grandmother would have been pleased at the numbers of friends who came and went—half of whom Ai-hua had never even seen before—bringing gifts of food and money. And Grandmother would have been proud of her “grandson.” Chio-min took full responsibility, and since Fu-min and Inspector Ch'en had not yet returned from their mission in the province, without Chio-min Ai-hua would have had no one to turn to for making decisions she felt she could not make.

For she herself felt no part of this pageant going on before her. She was grateful that there would be no cortege through the city to the cemetery. There was no longer a cemetery. Ai-hua had never told Grandmother that the graves had been removed from the good land on which the cemeteries had been laid out. All good Communists realized how sensible this was, with the great need for gardens, but Grandmother could never have accepted the fact that she would not be buried in the grave beside her husband. It had not been easy for Ai-hua to think up valid reasons why she and Grandmother could not make the journey out to the grave during Ch'ing Ming, when all graves must be properly cared for. Once she had had to pretend she was violently ill.

Now Grandmother would never know. She was lying there, dead in that coffin. She who had been so full of spirit, verve, *life*, was now a shriveled little corpse. Just before the lid was put on the coffin, Mrs. Feng gave her a rose and told her to put it in Grandmother's hand, which Ai-hua did, mechanically, still knowing beyond a doubt that Grandmother, who loved roses and who often sat with one of Mrs. Feng's roses in her hand, did not know or care that the flower was there beside her. Even when the heavy lid was lowered over the small figure, Ai-hua felt nothing. Mrs. Feng had to tell her when to wail.

There was one more duty to be performed. Chio-min had suggested that Grandmother's ashes be mingled with the wa-

ters of the river. He felt that Grandmother would want it to be that way and Ai-hua numbly agreed. It had been difficult to get a boatwoman to paddle them down the canal to the river. The old superstition still clung that it was inauspicious to have anything to do with the dead. But all was finally arranged.

On the way home from the crematorium, they stopped at the canal—Chio-min, Mrs. Feng and a few others of Grandmother's friends. Ai-hua looked around, still hoping that Fumin would return in time for this last ceremony, but he was nowhere in sight. They stepped into the little pleasure boat, usually gayly decorated, now draped with a few white rags of mourning, and a worried-looking boatwoman poled them down the canal to the broad expanse of the Pearl River.

As Chio-min emptied the jar of ashes, then dropped the jar into the water also, Ai-hua thought of the day when she and Grandmother had stopped to throw away Inspector Ch'en's broken teapot. Now all that was left of that proud, wise, little woman was mingled with the river, soon to be part of the wide ocean. Grandmother, who had always been with her, was now nowhere. What had happened? The corpse she had seen in the box, the small jar of ashes had nothing to do with the woman who had loved and cared for her since her birth. Could death do this to anyone as vitally alive as Grandmother? If so, living was a cruel, bitter joke.

It was only when Ai-hua returned to their little house and saw the huge empty space where Grandmother's beautifully lacquered coffin had stood upright against the wall, that the flood of grief began to surge through her body, washing the stone from her veins. Ai-hua had lived with that coffin since she was a little girl. Father had bought it for Grandmother, in accordance with the old customs, just before he had been taken away. This assurance that Grandmother would receive a worthy burial pleased the old lady even more than it would others who were elderly, for she had had a great fear that her son might insist upon a Christian ceremony at her death. Her father's



thoughtfulness and loving preparation for this very day took her back to her childhood and she felt so vividly the warmth of his presence and Grandmother's in this room with her now that it no longer mattered that the coffin and its contents had disappeared. She groped for the old cane chair and curled up in it, oblivious to Chio-min, Mrs. Feng and the others. She buried her face in her hands to shut out everything but the comfort of the love that now surrounded her.

"At last her tears are falling. Now she will be all right," said Mrs. Feng. A sigh of relief went round the circle. "Now we will fix her some food."

Fu-min and Inspector Ch'en returned next day, and with them came the great Chief Inspector Han. All three went at once to pay their respects to the memory of Grandmother Wong.

"We only heard the news yesterday," Fu-min explained. The other two men were accepting tea from Chio-min, the women having gone into the courtyard to make room for the honored guests. Fu-min took advantage of the moment to whisper to Ai-hua, "We left as soon as we got word. The only comfort I had was that Chio-min was with you."

"He's been like a real brother to me," said Ai-hua.

She was overwhelmed that not only Inspector Ch'en, but Chief Inspector Han himself, had been willing to come to her humble house. "It isn't as if I had a job of any importance," she thought to herself. "These men are truly great Communists." Then the old question returned: did they know more about Grandmother than she did? Had Grandmother been working for them? Had she been a spy? What had been in those letters Grandmother had written to Chief Inspector Han? Were the inspectors there to gather information Grandmother had not had time to give them before her death?

"She was a great woman, your grandmother," said Chief Inspector Han, easing himself comfortably into Grandmother's cane chair. "We were relatives of a sort, you know." Ai-hua

had not known. Why hadn't Grandmother told her? She looked at this relative of hers. It was a comfort to know there was one family link left. But *Chief Inspector Han?* He was a comfortable-looking person, as Grandmother had been—grey haired, heavy set, wisdom and kindness in his face. He looked a little like the photo of Chairman Mao, but perhaps older.

"Your grandmother and I always kept in touch," said Chief Inspector Han. "She was a great help to me."

"To me, too," said Inspector Ch'en.

This was Ai-hua's chance. "I'm glad to hear that my grandmother helped our worthy cause," she said. "Of course, I had not known of her close connection with our work. If I can help you with any information she may have left here, I shall, of course, do so, and will naturally keep it secret."

"What do you mean, Comrade Wong?" asked Inspector Ch'en.

"I thought from what you said that . . . that Grandmother, unknown to me, might have been one of our . . . informers."

The two men threw back their heads and laughed so hard that Mrs. Feng and the women couldn't resist running to the door to see what was happening.

"That's quite an idea, Ch'en," said the chief inspector, wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. "Why didn't we ever think of that?" His glance in the direction of the door dispersed the women.

"We should have; we certainly should have," said Inspector Ch'en. "We could have trusted her."

"We could have trusted her to tell us what she thought of us in no uncertain words, without any fear of us and with none of our feelings spared. It's hard to find a person like that today, unless it happens to be one of our enemies. No, my dear child, your grandmother was not working for us."

"In a way, she was," said Inspector Ch'en, "though she never knew it. There was the time when she made a trip across the city to help a woman, as she was always doing. She came back, railing at me for neglecting my duty. A latrine needed emptying

across the city, mind you; not even in my own precinct! But she kept at me until I got something done about it. The result was the exposure of that sewer scandal I told you about. You know, it suddenly occurs to me now, that Grandmother Wong may have known the whole story and this was her way of bringing it to light."

They went on reminiscing, telling stories of the goodness and generosity of the old lady, and of her fearless speaking out when the occasion warranted. Ai-hua noticed that Inspector Ch'en did not tell the story of the broken teapot, for which she was very grateful. This *affable* Inspector Ch'en she had never seen before—another of Grandmother's miracles.

The men had made Grandmother seem so near that it wasn't until they rose to leave that she realized again there was no Grandmother. There wasn't even a coffin lying in a hillside. She could not hold back the tears as the thought occurred to her that she would never again have to worry about Grandmother annoying Inspector Ch'en.

Chief Inspector Han tried to comfort her. "There, there, child. If there is anything I can do to help you from now on, you are to let me know at once, do you hear? After all, we are relatives."

Between sobs, Ai-hua answered, "I am not worthy of such honor."

"See to it that she does let me know, Li," he said to Fu-min, who was about to join Inspector Ch'en in conversation with Chio-min.

"The last letter I ever received from your grandmother asked if, in return for the few small favors she'd been able to do for me, I would look after you if anything happened to her," Chief Inspector Han said to Ai-hua. "Looking back on it now, it was almost as if she had had a premonition that this was going to happen. Only one of those 'small favors' your grandmother mentioned was paying all my expenses through college. That was years ago, when her husband was alive. They

were rich, you know. My college education was not all Grandmother Wong did for me. So you can see why I would be extremely grateful to have this opportunity to repay her in *some* way. You would be doing *me* a favor if I could be of assistance."

"Thank you, more than I can say," said Ai-hua. "Perhaps some day. . . ."

"I wish you lived nearer. Inspector Ch'en doesn't want me to bring this up, but would you consider making your home in Wuchou where I have my headquarters? My wife wanted me to urge you to come. She said to tell you she would welcome you as a daughter. You'd like my wife. Your grandmother wasn't pleased about our marri . . . your grandmother would have been delighted to see how much my wife wanted you to come back with me."

"Oh, do thank her," said Ai-hua. "What can I say to such kindness? My plans are not clear now. I'm all confused. I have my work here, and. . . ."

"That's exactly what I told you, Chief Inspector," said Inspector Ch'en, as he joined them, having finished his conversation with the two boys. "Don't take her away from us now. Things have piled up and we need her badly." He turned to Ai-hua. "I will not press you to return. But when you feel you can come back, be assured you are needed."

The young people accompanied their guests to the wall door on the street. As the last good-byes were being said, Chief Inspector Han added, "Another thing your grandmother wrote in that letter was that I should keep an eye on Li Fu-min." A smile spread over his genial face. "She said he was a man worth watching. We shall see if she was right this time, as usual."

The young people stood politely, watching their guests out of sight. As they went back through the courtyard, Fu-min said, "I can't tell you how stunned I was to hear that you are a relative of Chief Inspector Han! And to think that Grandmother wrote to him about me! That surely was good of her. I can't get over this whole thing!"

"Too much has happened to me to feel anything," Ai-hua said. Then she knew that what she had said wasn't quite true. Tears came again as she remembered that when Grandmother was already ill, she used her failing strength to write to Chief Inspector Han, asking him to care for her granddaughter and saying a good word for Fu-min.

"You are tired," said Chio-min. "I'm going home with Fu-min now. We have a lot to talk over; but I'll be back in the morning to help finish the cleaning up. Mrs. Feng said she'd be in to spend the night with you, so you won't be alone." The two boys left together.

"It's all so hopeless," said Ai-hua, as they were sorting Grandmother's papers next day. "You're alive and then you're dead and nothing you did matters because suddenly it all ends, even before it's all finished."

"We had an aunt who believed there was a life after death," said Chio-min.

"Was she a Christian?" asked Ai-hua.

"I don't know. I never thought of it. But now that you mention it, our parents used to whisper to each other a lot when she was visiting us, and they didn't like it when Aunt and I had long talks. I can't remember anyone ever saying she was a Christian, though. Why do you ask?"

"Well, Christians believe . . . so I am told, that there is a life after death. Did you ever hear such rubbish?"

"I don't know what I believe about death. Aunt used to say, 'Look around you, Chio-min. Keep your eyes open. Think. Then decide what you will believe. So, I have kept my eyes open. I have seen a dead seed planted and a blade of wheat growing. I've seen winter kill everything in sight and spring bring it all to life again. Is there a God behind all this, Ai-hua?'"

"Of course not, silly."

"Aunt used to say, 'Nobody knows whether there is a God or there isn't. You have a fifty percent chance of being right either way.' She chose to believe there was a God. She said he

loved her and even cared enough to guide her in her plans. She was a very happy, capable woman."

"She probably would have been anyway. She sounds like that kind of person."

Was Chio-min trying to get something out of her? Had Fu-min told him she had a Christian background and asked him to find out whether or not she herself was a Christian? Chio-min looked so innocent. He was certainly gullible. This aunt had made quite an impression on him. "You know you shouldn't be thinking such thoughts," she told him. "You and Fu-min are both good Communists."

"You aren't convinced of that, are you?" he said. He took the papers from her lap and laid them on the table, then took her two hands in his. "Ai-hua, a police station is no place for a girl like you. It has made you suspicious of everybody."

"How can you say that?" she asked. "I'm not suspicious of anyone."

"I see your questioning look as I tell you my thoughts. I've watched you wondering what lies behind every statement Fu-min or I make. Yesterday you weren't sure of Inspector Ch'en or even of Chief Inspector Han. You kept looking for other meanings behind their words. You suspected Grandmother of having been an informer—on our side, of course—but you were suspicious of her."

"I only wanted to learn the truth," she said, brokenly.

"And even after all the two inspectors said, you were still not sure. You thought they might be trying to deceive you. And you fully expected to find something in these papers of Grandmother's that would bear out your suspicions. Am I right?"

Ai-hua hung her head.

"Don't stay here in this atmosphere. Come north with me where life is happy, where people sing at their work and dance with joy at the harvest."

"We sing and dance here, too, before the portrait of Chairman Mao."

"I've seen such dancing, at a large group meeting I attended with Fu-min one night on our way home. There was no joy in it. You aren't happy, Ai-hua. It isn't only Grandmother's death. It's something else. I've never seen you really let yourself go and have a good time. You're suspicious of everybody."

She pulled her hands away. "You may be right," she said. Then the words poured out of her. "I don't want to be suspicious. Do you know what I want most in life? I want to be a loving, happy wife to some fine man, and a loving, happy mother to some little girl. I want her to grow up in this wonderful land where she will have every opportunity—where she will be free. But this can never happen, Chio-min."

"Why not? There's nothing unreasonable about it, except that you should, of course, want sons instead of daughters, you being as old fashioned as you are."

She did not smile. "You wouldn't understand. Your father was a good Communist, so it is natural for you and Fu-min to be good Communists. I've always had to keep trying to be a better Communist. Maybe it is the police station that makes me suspicious, or am I trying hard to look for wrongs in others because I'm such a bad Communist myself? If I can say, 'so-and-so does such-and-such,' then I can feel I'm not so bad after all. Is that it, Chio-min?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"In school I had to keep *proving* I was a good Communist because my father was a Never mind." She stopped, tense.

"Tell me about it, if you feel you can. Try to tell me."

"All right. I'll tell you, Chio-min. I can't have a child until I can look into her eyes and tell her that her mother did not betray the father she loved. And if I did *not* betray his love, I was not a good Communist. Can I tell my daughter that, Chio-min? My father was a Christian and I knew he taught me things he should never have taught me. If I *did* keep silent, I was wrong and should be punished."

"You must have been very young, Ai-hua."

"Not so young that I didn't know better. You haven't heard the worst. I would be glad, glad, glad, if I knew for sure that I did *not* inform on my father. I have to find out what really happened. I have to know. I'll go to any lengths to learn the truth."

"Try to forget it all, Ai-hua. If you find out you did not inform on your father, you'll feel you have to confess. You know what that may mean. If you discover you did accuse him, you'll be miserable. Leave it all alone, I beg of you. You were only a child. Before I go, promise me you won't try to find out anything."

"You are going? Yes, I suppose you are. Chio-min, how can I thank you? You've been a brother to me—the best brother a girl ever had. What will I do without you?"

"You'll have Fu-min."

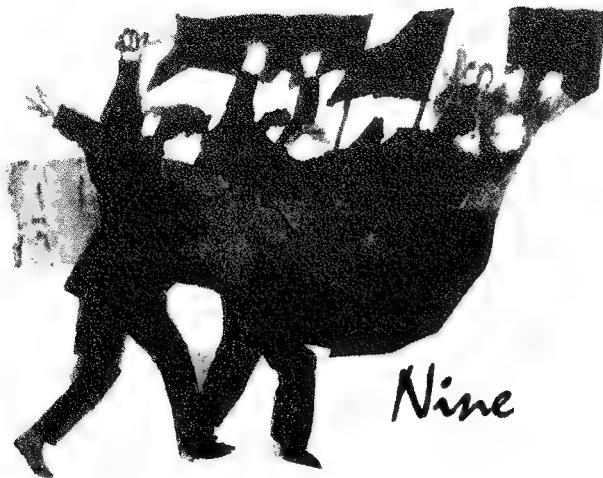
"And, of course, Inspector Ch'en and dear Chief Inspector Han," she said hurriedly.

Chio-min glanced at his watch and rose. She could see his impatience. "I wish I could stay and help you finish, but I have to go now. Good-bye, Ai-hua."

He left so abruptly she was stunned. Hearing the street door bang shut, she realized she hadn't even gone with him to the outside door.

That she hadn't stopped him! It was daylight and Chio-min was out in the streets, searching for Big Red! Should she run to the police station for Fu-min? Inspector Ch'en must have given Chio-min permission to go, or he would never have done it. Perhaps that was what they were talking about here yesterday.

"What shall I do? Dear God, what shall I do?" she asked. "I've been thinking only of myself. I should have found out from Chio-min what his plans were. I should have stopped him. Oh God, have mercy." She threw herself on her knees beside Grandmother's bed and prayed unashamedly.



It was the longest morning Ai-hua ever remembered. She had risen from her knees when her prayers for Chio-min were exhausted. She knew she should have a guilty feeling because she had prayed, but somehow she didn't. Her ears ached from straining to hear sounds that might mean a mob had gathered. She had no idea what was happening in the city. Perhaps the Red Guard had left and Chio-min was safe. She tried to think whether or not she had heard the noises of violence during the past days, but all she could recall was the wailing of women and the sympathetic murmur of voices.

It suddenly occurred to her that years might pass before she would know what happened to Chio-min. There was no longer any reason for Fu-min to see her again, since he wouldn't be coming to take Chio-min home at night. "I can't sit here another moment," she said to herself. "If I go back to work, I'll at least be in touch with what is going on."

It was a strange feeling to be walking the familiar streets alone. Everywhere she saw evidence that the city was far from normal—a muddy red arm band lay in the gutter; boarding

had been torn from shop fronts; glass had been broken in windows, even in the upper stories of some of the apartment houses. And there seemed to be many more soldiers in the streets than usual. When a fusilade of shots rang out a few blocks away, Ai-hua instinctively reached out for her grandmother's hand, then knew again that she was alone.

She was glad to see their old friend, the food vendor, on her usual corner. Ai-hua suddenly realized she was hungry. The kind woman said nothing of Grandmother's death, but her long sighs and the generous portion of gruel in her deepest bowl let Ai-hua know of her sympathy.

"Things are bad here, bad," she whispered to Ai-hua. "You shouldn't be out alone."

"What is happening?" asked Ai-hua.

"Who knows? Soldiers all over the city; fighting in the streets. Nobody knows what they're fighting about or whose side who is on. One day it looks one way, the next day another. Aiya!"

"Is it safe for you to be here?"

"Safe enough. Everybody wants food. Besides, I'm not educated enough to be dangerous. There aren't any foreign books or old paintings in *my* house. Sometimes it pays to be poor and ignorant. But you are neither. You shouldn't be out alone."

Ai-hua thanked the woman for her concern, paid her and went on, more frightened than ever.

At the police station, the mound of papers, files and cards that had accumulated in her absence was further evidence that the city continued to be in a troubled state. Fu-min and the inspector were out, as she had hoped they would be. It could mean they were looking for Chio-min. Only the two newest men on the staff were in, and they had their hands full with the numbers of people who had been called to give an account of themselves or to be questioned. In no time at all, Ai-hua was immersed in her work, the thought of what might be happening to Chio-min a numb, underlying pain.

Inspector Ch'en returned in the late afternoon and was obviously relieved to see her at her desk. "I did not expect you back so soon," he said. "I hope what I said yesterday did not make you feel you had to come."

She wanted to shout, "Where is Chio-min?" Instead she said quietly, "Not at all, Inspector Ch'en. It is better for me to be here working, where I am needed."

A few minutes later she heard the back door open and close. Hoping it might be Fu-min, she hurried to the washroom, ostensibly to clean the ink from her fingers. Fu-min was surprised to see her. She interrupted his greeting with, "Chio-min has gone!"

"I know, I know," he said. "It was beautiful. The plan worked perfectly." His broad smile allayed all her fears. "I'll tell you about it when we walk home together tonight."

Ai-hua went into the washroom, shut the door and stood with her back against it. Chio-min was safe and Fu-min would be walking home with her. "Thank you, God, oh thank you," she prayed. Chio-min had said there was no joy in her life? It would please him if he could see the happiness in that face in the mirror, she thought.

It seemed as if nothing had happened between this and the last time she and Fu-min had walked home together. Sunset was catching the same gold cupola atop one of the buildings ahead; the same gold wash covered the upper floors of banks, warehouses and stores. Now that Chio-min was safe, she could wait to hear the details of what had happened.

But Fu-min was eager to tell his story. "We worked the whole thing out last night under Inspector Ch'en's guidance," he began. "We set the time for eleven-thirty this morning. You see, the inspector had to be sure that Chio-min wasn't making up the story of Big Red so that he could get back home without being thought a coward."

"Chio-min would never do that."

"Of course not, but you know our boss; he never takes any-

thing for granted. With things the way they are in the city, he hasn't had much time to spend investigating Chio-min's case. So he thought that if he brought Chio-min and Big Red together, he might catch Big Red in the act of showing what kind of a person he really was. Then he'd know for sure that Chio-min was telling the truth.

"But the inspector had an even bigger reason behind it. From the beginning, the inspector has felt there must be a ringleader inciting the crowd to some of the violence that's been going on. If it turned out to be Big Red, he'd have proof of that, too. And if it weren't Big Red—if another ringleader was in charge, he'd step up and take over from Big Red, just to show his authority."

"Either way, the inspector could single out his culprit," said Ai-hua.

"Right. Our men pretended to be part of the Red Guard and suggested they sack the old library. I don't know how they'd missed it so far; maybe because it's sort of out of the way, off there at the edge of the city. The men hinted that there might be a few intellectuals hiding in the stacks and it would be fun to make them sweat a little. Big Red was all for it, we heard later.

"In the meantime, hidden behind the stacks were, not the intellectuals, but more of our men and some from the local precinct nearby—not enough to do much with the crowd that showed up, but we could at least slow things down a bit—we hoped!"

"Where was Chio-min all this time?" asked Ai-hua.

"Standing just inside the front door of the building. He'd be the first person anyone saw when the door was opened. We counted on that person being someone who knew Chio-min and who would shout for Big Red as soon as he saw who it was. Boy, was that taking a chance! I was shaking like a girl, I was so scared. Inspector Ch'en and I were placed so we'd be behind the door when it opened, but Chio-min was standing

right in front of it. If they took him for an intellectual. . . . ”

“He must have been terrified.”

“He certainly didn’t show it. He stood there as cool as rain. I was still worried for fear he’d run when the door opened and spoil everything. Bravery has never been one of Chio-min’s strong points. But I’ll never be able to say that again.” He smiled, savoring the memory of what had happened.

“Go on, *please*,” said Ai-hua.

“As I said before, it couldn’t have worked better. Our men in the crowd were able to pick out Big Red and sort of elbow him and a few of his close buddies along until they were the ones who would naturally have to break the lock and open the door. We helped them a little, too, to save time. We’d already taken off the board nailed across the inside. In a matter of minutes, Big Red and Chio-min were face to face, and Chio-min never blinked an eye. In fact, Chio-min stared him down so hard that one of Big Red’s gang had to say, ‘Well, there he is, Big Red. You’ve found him. What are you going to do now?’

“Big Red was stung into action. He pulled out a long, vicious-looking knife, and. . . .”

Ai-hua shuddered. Fu-min reached for her hand and tucked it under his arm. She was too frightened to pull away.

“Don’t think I wasn’t scared,” he said. “I was petrified when I saw that knife and the look on Big Red’s face. He’d probably been telling everybody the terrible things he’d do when he found Chio-min. Now if he didn’t do them, he’d be in danger of losing his hold on the gang. I saw it all in his face in that one split second when he whipped out that knife. Then he smiled his mean, oily smile and said, ‘Remember how you used to faint when you saw blood, Chio-min? I’m going to draw a little of yours and show it to you. We’ll see how brave you are. No coward is fit for Chairman Mao’s Cultural Revolution. Eh, fellows?’ The gang cheered and shouted the slogans. They were all enjoying this.”

“What did Chio-min do?”

"He just stood there. He even let Big Red pull up his shirt and all but start to slash the knife across his belly. Then he quickly grabbed Big Red's wrist and gave it such a twist that Big Red screamed and dropped on one knee. I thought any minute the mob would fall on Chio-min, but not a soul moved and no one made a sound, not even in the back of the crowd. It must have looked as if they were on a stage, the two of them at the top of that long flight of stone steps, the stone lions on either side. And I think the boys were stunned that anyone would dare to lay a hand on Big Red. They just waited to see what would happen. Chio-min looked like a giant standing there. He's always been big for his age, but he certainly must have grown lately."

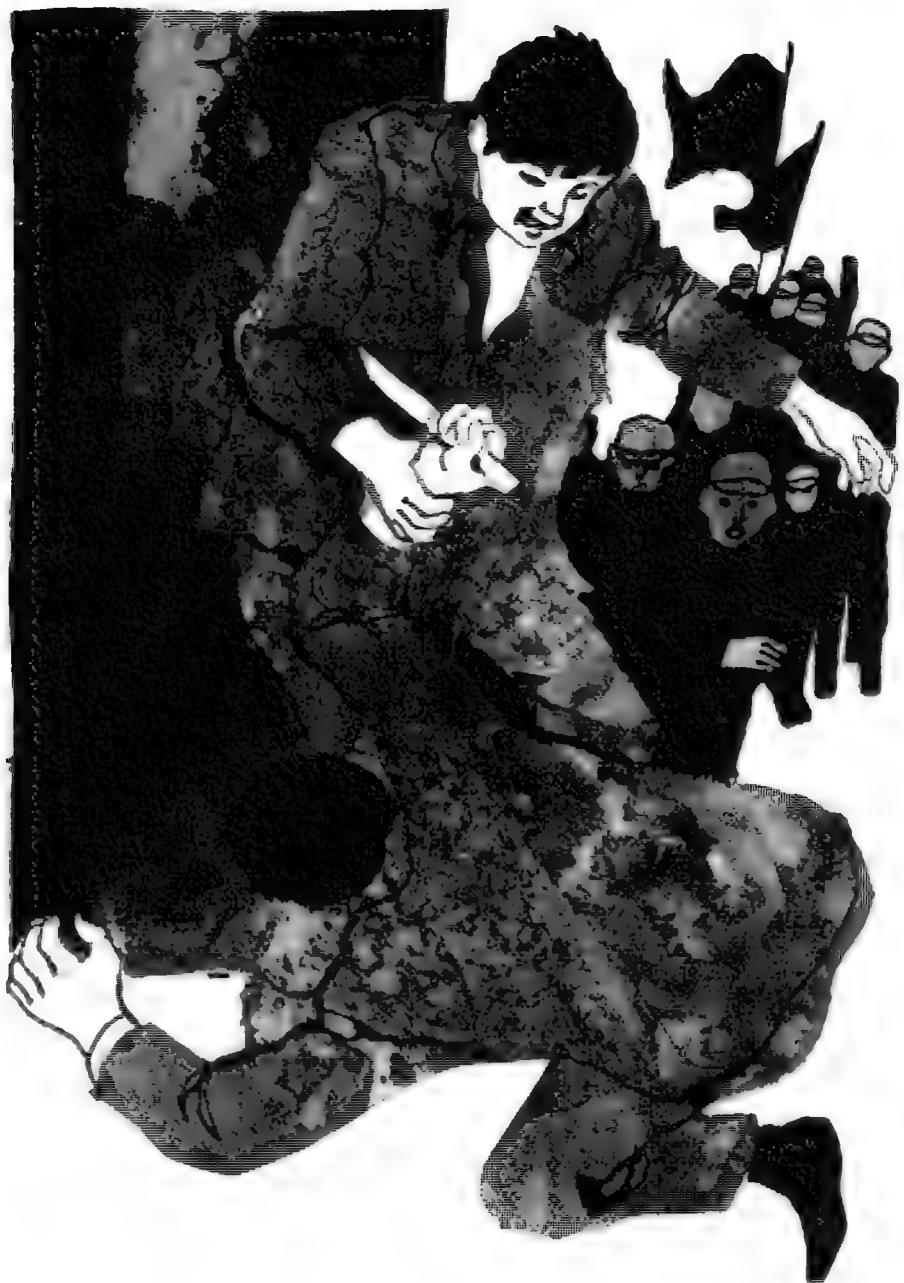
"Don't keep me waiting, Fu-min. Tell me what happened."

"Chio-min stood over Big Red and said, loud enough for everyone to hear, 'Put your knife away, Big Brother.' Then he stooped down and took it away from Big Red as if he'd been a child. 'I'm going home long enough to bring in the harvest,' Chio-min said. 'You come with me.' You could hear the wave of surprise move across the crowd."

"I wish I'd been there to see him," said Ai-hua.

"There were yells of 'Hooray for Li Chio-min.' Then someone shouted above the rest, 'Li Chio-min cares for the people. He knows we need food. Who will follow Li Chio-min? Not all of us can go. Some must see to the Revolution, but those of us who are farmers should bring in the grain.'

"Big Red was in a frenzy. He jumped to his feet and tried to claw at Chio-min's face. But that brother of mine brushed him off as he would a swarm of mosquitos. Big Red's buddies finally came up and hauled him off. 'Come on,' they said, 'we've got work to do.' Later our men told us they were running through the crowd saying things like, 'Do you want to go back to school where you'll have to do just as you're told?' or 'So you want to go back to carrying smelly pails of human excrement to dump on somebody else's fields.'



"Most of the fellows didn't pay much attention to Big Red and his gang. Our men were watching his every move, now that they knew who to watch. The Red Guard boys were fed up with Big Red; they had the interest of the Cultural Revolution at heart and wanted to get on with it. For some reason or other, they seemed to forget all about the library and when the excitement died down, they went off to look for other targets.

"Inspector Ch'en had all the information he wanted. He praised Chio-min for a job well done and offered him a place on our staff if he wanted it, an opportunity Chio-min promptly turned down."

"Where was he all this time?"

"Still standing right where he had been. Boys kept coming up to talk to him about going back north for the harvest. Quite a little crowd gathered and we talked and talked. The upshot was that I took them to the train and put them on it."

"Did you think it was a good idea?"

"I had my doubts at first, but as we were on our way to the railway station, we stopped to read the wall posters, and there, believe it or not, was a big notice saying that Chairman Mao was ordering the soldiers to go into the fields to bring in the harvest. Chio-min was certainly relieved to know that Chairman Mao thought the harvest was *that* important. I felt better about it, too. We all went along singing at the top of our voices and shouting, 'Long live Chairman Mao Tse-tung!'"

Ai-hua was quiet for some time. When they reached the block where she lived, she said, "Chio-min didn't come back to say good-bye. I would like to have thanked him again for all he did for Grandmother and me."

"He didn't have any time before leaving," said Fu-min.

"Did he send any message?"

"I don't remember any. I was busy getting the kids off on the train. Come to think of it, he did say something. One of the songs we sang as we went along was 'The Sun Does Not Set on the Grasslands.' Chio-min sort of whispered, 'That song will

always remind me of Ai-hua.' I asked him why, because that wasn't one of those we three sang together. He said you'd know. Then he said something else that sounded funny. He said, 'It's just as well that Ai-hua didn't decide to go north with me. I'm going to have my hands full, keeping my new gang straight.' What did he mean about your going north with him?"

"Nothing, really. He hoped that sometime I'd go to see his village."

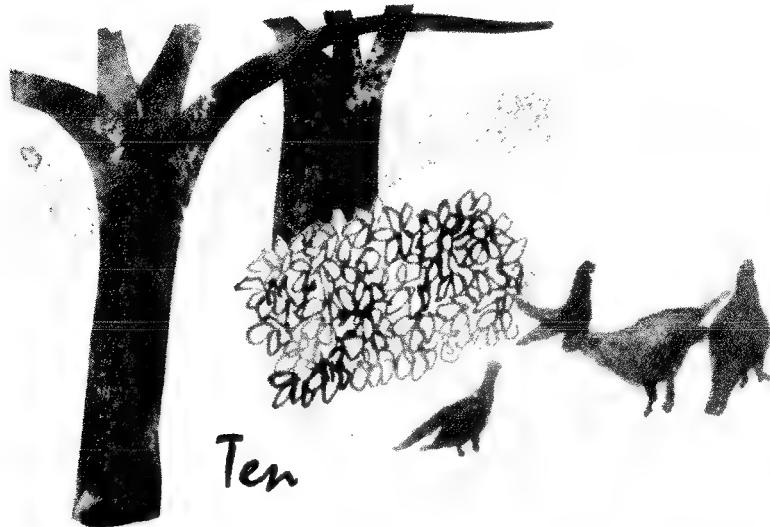
"Sometime I hope you *will* see our village, Ai-hua."

By now, they were in the courtyard. "Do you remember the first time I came here?" asked Fu-min.

Mrs. Feng suddenly burst from the apartment house. "I thought you'd never come," she said. "Your evening meal is ready, Ai-hua. You're eating with us and don't tell me you aren't hungry. Good night, Fu-min."

He smiled at her broad hint. "Good night, Mrs. Feng," he said. "See you later, Ai-hua." Then whispered, "I must talk to you about moving into the apartment house. You really shouldn't stay alone."

Much as she hated to say good-night to him at this early hour, she was relieved that she would not have to listen to his persuasions against her living alone. She had always dreamed of the day when she could live in the apartment house, but there was something she had to do before she moved. Tomorrow was Sunday. She would go to the park where it would be quiet and try to think things through.



Ai-hua hadn't slept much the night before; a decision was forcing itself upon her. She couldn't help being glad she had the whole park to herself. There would be no family picnics or school outings with this much turmoil in the city.

The perfume of the blossoms of the camel's foot tree made it difficult for her to plan anything . . . criminal. The word sounded harsh in the fragrant air. "Say it to yourself, say the word 'criminal' for that's what it is," said a voice within her. But the grass was cool to her fingers; the tree at her back was strong to lean against—"like a strong man," she thought.

If only she could have a natural, normal life, like the other girls from her school. They could look forward to a happy marriage, husband and wife working side by side, stopping at the nursery with their children in the morning, picking them up again at night. But who would marry a girl with *her* background? Even if she decided not to tell her husband of her Christian heritage, it would slip out in spite of her. A man would find out if his wife had come to depend on prayers to God to see her through her difficulties. She would cry it out in

some emergency. A man would know eventually that he had married a woman who was not ashamed that she had knelt at her father's chair as a child and that she loved her father though she knew he had been a traitor to the Revolution.

There was one who already knew all about her. His was the only face she ever saw when she dreamed those foolish dreams. She could never burden him with such a wife, even if the time should come when he would ask that the dream come true, which was highly improbable.

Yet Fu-min would be the one most deeply implicated if she were to carry out her plans. "Steel yourself, Ai-hua," the voice within her whispered. "Remember, you have to know. Nothing, nobody now, can keep you from going into the files and learning the truth. Did you, or did you not betray your father's love? Did you as a child inform on him and even in some small way help to bring about his death?" She was tired of the question going round and round in her head, day in and day out.

Chio-min's words came back to her. "Leave it all alone, I beg of you. Promise me that you will not try to find out anything." She was glad that Chio-min was many miles away by now. At least he, after all he had done for Grandmother and for her, would not be implicated in any way. But the others—Inspector Ch'en and—oh! Chief Inspector Han! He was now a relative. Would his enemies find out and use this against him? She had known of instances when a much smaller crime had been so used. How could she be doing this to those who had been so kind to her?

"You were a child. Try to forget it all," Chio-min had said. But the inner voice replied, "Steel yourself; think it through, step by step. What are you going to do and how are you going to do it?"

The little red book slipped from her lap into the grass. She picked it up quickly and held it against her. "I don't want things to change for me. I love my job; I'm proud that I was the one of all my class chosen for it. Father, too, would have

been proud of me. I want to work for the Golden Age of China. Wouldn't Father tell me to forget the past I can do nothing about and work for the China of today?"

But the other side of her said, "What kind of a contribution can *you* make? Who would trust you? Once before you almost opened the drawer to the file. You will do it again. Your desire to know will never let you rest. You might as well do it now and get it over with—now, before you move in with Mrs. Feng where you will not be able to go out in the middle of the night, unlock the back door of the police station with the key given you, and spend long hours going through each drawer until you find the confession you know your father must have written. In it, he will surely have mentioned you. This is the only way you can know whether or not you are fit to be the wife of Fu-min—whether or not you are fit to work with him for China. And if you are very careful, Ai-hua, you will never be found out."

"I can't do it; I can't," she told herself. "If I learn what I have to learn by stealing the file, even for a few minutes, I will have betrayed my teacher, the inspector, Chief Inspector Han and Fu-min. Oh, my dear father, even for you, I cannot do this. For everybody's sake, I must forget the past. You wouldn't want me to bring shame upon these people, would you? I must forget marriage, forget the child I can never face. I must even forget you, my father. Now I can never learn what I did to you, or if you found it in your heart to forgive me if I wronged you." She covered her face with her hands. "But someday, after I am dead, I will know. Then, will you forgive me?"

And the voice within her came back, "What kind of a Communist believes in a life after death? These are the old ideas—thoughts to be completely rooted out of our society."

Ai-hua threw herself on the ground, sobbing dry, bitter sobs. The war within her was too much to overcome. She would try to do what Chio-min had wanted her to do—forget it all. She would push every thought that came into her mind, back down



deep within her. She would just stop thinking and go on working at the police station, doing her routine duties as well as she possibly could. There was no other way.

At the police station the next week, Ai-hua worked like a highly efficient robot. Mornings, she walked through the streets alone, though twice she thought Fu-min might be following her. Turning quickly, she could not see him anywhere. "I probably imagine it," she told herself, "but how can I push him out of my life when even his shadow seems to be near me?"

She was sure it was her imagination when she reached the office one morning. Overnight, Fu-min had changed. There was no more banter, no more teasing. He stopped at her desk only long enough to transact the business at hand. At times, he appeared almost irritated by her. That evening he walked home with her, but said little, and then only on the subject of a case they were working on. He walked blocks without speaking at all. It was one thing for Ai-hua to forget her "silly dreams" and quite another for Fu-min to act as if those dreams had had no possibility of fulfillment in the first place.

"You don't *have* to see me home," she said, piqued at the way she was being treated. Had he forgotten the evenings the three had spent together—the songs, the laughter?

"Inspector Ch'en's orders," Fu-min replied.

"*Inspector Ch'en's orders!*" Ai-hua was furious. So all this time he had had to take her home, while she had been thinking he cared for her. Then she remembered he had come that first night, had held her and touched her hair, and that was certainly before there was any trouble in the city, before Inspector Ch'en would have issued any such order. "Men!" she fumed inside.

He came because he wanted help—help for his brother, that was it. And he had hoodwinked Grandmother and her into giving it to him. She felt like a boiling teakettle inside and wished she could explode in Fu-min's face. Now that he had what he wanted and Chio-min had gone, he was no longer interested in

her. He probably met lots of girls in the course of his duty and knew how to handle them. She wondered what he'd say if she accused him of it. It would do her good to see him squirm.

"I suppose a police officer has to play many parts to accomplish what he sets out to do, as an actor does," she began.

"What do you mean?" he asked, showing no interest.

"Well, he uses disguises, just as actors wear costumes. Sometimes he plays the part of a hero, sometimes the villain, or the aggrieved, or the victor or the lover—whatever will give him what he wants from the situation."

Far from squirming, he changed the subject with what amounted to a scolding. "You know nothing about communal living," he said. "You've lived alone practically all your life. I can well imagine you've never once lived full time in a nursery or a commune or a dormitory. Good Communists believe in communal living."

Was he now accusing her of not being a good Communist? His insinuations were that she had lived as a Christian lived. All Christians tried to keep their children close to them. "What are you trying to tell me?" she asked.

"When are you going to move into the apartment house? Mrs. Feng tells me there is space for you now."

"Why do you add to your burdens by worrying about what is clearly my business? Or is this, too, the inspector's orders?"

He did not answer at once. When he did, it was an effort for him to get the words out. "If you move into the apartment, you will find people working near the police station who will be glad to walk home with you at night and again in the morning."

"This will, no doubt, relieve you of the terrible burden of seeing me home. I shall tell the inspector that it isn't at all necessary."

"No, don't do that," he said quickly.

"And why not? Thank you, Mr. Li, for your deep concern for my every need. However, I will be the one to choose with whom I shall walk and where."

"Perhaps that would be better for both of us," he said, and left her at the corner nearest her home.

"Just for that, I will not move until I am good and ready," she said to herself.

Neither Fu-min nor Inspector Ch'en were in their offices when she arrived at work next morning. She was disappointed not to be able to tell Fu-min all the clever, sarcastic things she had thought of during the night. But soon the pressures of the day crowded out all other thoughts.

The new men were not as skillful at conducting their investigations as were Fu-min and the inspector. How many times had she seen people leave the counter, proud, smug looks on their faces, thinking they'd been successful in withholding information they had feared might be forced from them, never realizing that the inspector had the whole story from their very lips.

Today was a bad day altogether. One stubborn fellow was taken into the back office by two of the new men and beaten into a confession. Ai-hua dreaded these beatings, though she knew that some got just what they deserved. Far worse for her were the times when she felt the man was innocent. Then she had all she could do to keep from running in to plead with the policemen and beg them to stop what they were doing. Today she cringed with every blow and suffered with every moan, but she knew this man was guilty. She had been indignant at his glib answers. Did the fellow think that policemen were gullible morons?

Even the routine questionings were tiring today. Usually she was interested in seeing how cleverly and how quickly Fu-min got his information. Today the men droned the same questions over and over again, slowly wearing down the culprits, slowly wearing down Ai-hua. By closing time, her desk was still cluttered.

It seemed strange not to have to hurry out to Grandmother; she still wasn't used to it. It came to her that it didn't matter to anyone where she was or what she was doing. She would have

to walk home alone tonight and there would certainly be no shadow to follow her—no benevolent shadow. There might be dangers far stronger than shadows. Yet when one of the new young men offered to accompany her, she replied firmly, "I have another hour's work to do. I'll close up; you go home." There were other offers and it was only after much urging on Ai-hua's part, and finally the lie that a friend was to pick her up at six, that she got the last of the men out and the back door locked behind them.

What a day it had been! Her head buzzed, she was so tired. Such stupid people! How could you possibly build a Golden Age with people like the ones who had come into the station this afternoon? No wonder Chairman Mao had had to start a Cultural Revolution.

But there'd been one old man who was innocent; Ai-hua was sure of it. She had listened carefully to the whole interrogation. She had felt, too, that Fu-min would have called in Inspector Ch'en on this case, and if he'd been out of the city, the questioning would have been postponed until his return. These were the men Inspector Ch'en enjoyed conversing with. "It's from listening to him work on these cases that I've learned most of what I know," Fu-min once told her. Her two bosses would have recognized this man's innocence; they would have appreciated his integrity and they would have worked to save a man like this, trying to convert him to the cause. Why hadn't this happened to her father?

It was unbelievably quiet in the high-ceilinged room, now that everyone had gone. As she sorted cards, filed them, and wrote the letters, the sounds of the beating and the moans of today's victim reverberated around the walls of her mind. And the face of an innocent old man being led away flashed on and off before her eyes. Chio-min was right—a police station was no place for a girl. If only Fu-min had been here; if only Inspector Ch'en had not gone away. She didn't think she could endure another day of the new, inexperienced men.

Suddenly the question stabbed her: what kind of a man had interviewed her father? As if hypnotized, she rose from her desk, went straight to Fu-min's office, and opened the drawer in the file cabinet she had been so near to opening before. This time there was no hesitation whatever; there were no doubts, no self-recriminations, no feelings at all. She simply went through the drawers systematically and carefully, searching for the name that meant so much to her.



Eleven

Ai-hua went through the files until it was so dark she couldn't see. Though the dates on the other folders showed she was in the right drawer, her father's file was nowhere to be found. Had he used his school name? Or the name he had before he became a Christian? Perhaps his seminary name? Unfortunately, she couldn't remember what those names were, and Grandmother wasn't there to tell her.

She decided to sit beside those cabinets and read every dossier under the name of Wong, if it took all night. She'd need a flashlight. Where did Fu-min keep his? She, who had always been careful to avoid even glancing in the direction of his desk, for fear she might accidentally see something she shouldn't, now pulled open the desk drawers with no hesitation and searched until she found the flashlight.

Suddenly the clouds in the night sky parted and the room was washed with moonlight. The flashlight glittered in her hand. Light flooded over her and she came alive as if she had been shaken from the grave.

"What am I doing here? Oh God, what am I doing here?"

she moaned. "It's night! The watchman will be making his rounds any minute!"

Hurriedly she closed the files and wiped the cabinets with her handkerchief, hoping to remove the fingerprints. Then she put the flashlight back where she had found it and went into the front office to clear her desk. Scooping everything into the two top drawers, she took one last look around, and slipped out the back door, locking it behind her.

What had she been thinking of? She tried to remember, but couldn't think why she had gone into Fu-min's office in the first place. She recalled hurrying the men out of her way, but certainly not with any idea of doing what she had just done. She swept from her mind all thought of the consequences of her actions. They were too terrible to contemplate.

It was cold in the night air and she had not worn her sweater; it was dark in the alley and she was afraid. When she got to the glaring street lights on the main thoroughfare, she was even more afraid. Someone was sure to see her and report that she had been seen coming from the police station at a late hour. The streets appeared deserted, but they were ominously quiet. She stayed within the shadows of the buildings and felt as if she would never get home. No matter how fast she walked, she was still not covering the distance. After what seemed like an eternity, she finally slipped across the courtyard and into her little house.

She must get into bed at once. Everything about the house must look as if she'd been home all evening. She got out a book and left it open on the table; mixed a few tea leaves with cold water and set the cup and saucer near the book; arranged her sewing as if she had been working on it.

At daylight, she was sure she hadn't slept at all. But she must have been asleep and dreaming, for she heard herself saying aloud, "Grandmother, I've had the worst dream. Tell me what it means."

Grandmother had always calmed her fears by calling the



ogres of her dreams "good messengers" and the bad news "an unexpected blessing." Nobody, not even Grandmother, could change this despair into anything but more tragedy for her. And the worst of it was, she had not accomplished her purpose. She hadn't found her father's confession. What was left for her? She had destroyed her life for nothing. No one would ever trust her again.

It was time to dress for work, but that was all over now. She could never, never go back to the police station. Within a few hours, they would know what she had done. The men would be questioned and they would all say she'd been in a great hurry to get them out of the office. Then the experts would find the fibers of the thread from the handkerchief she'd used to wipe the files. She must have been out of her mind to do such a thing. She could have thought of a plausible reason for looking up something in the files. Inspector Ch'en would have believed her. Instead, she had shown to the world that she knew she was doing something wrong. She herself had proved her guilt.

She dressed automatically. Slipping into her blouse, she felt in her pocket the key to the back door of the police station—one more bar across the prison she had made for herself. Inspector Ch'en could not leave a person loose in the city with this key in her possession, especially one whom he could not trust.

Would the men from her own precinct come for her? Or would they refer the case to the precinct where she lived? That would be easier. She could not bear the thought of one of her own fellow-workers seeing her in this disgrace. "Oh God, don't let it be Fu-min who comes for me," she prayed.

But what difference did it make? He had shown clearly that he did not care for her. She might as well be dead. He might feel sorry when he saw her lying in this very room where they had had such good times together. She wished she could tell Chio-min what she was going to do. He wouldn't let her do anything foolish. He would discover her looking through Grand-

mother's box for the strongest medicine she could find—the one marked in Grandmother's handwriting, DANGEROUS, DO NOT TOUCH UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES! Ai-hua looked at the large, round balls of medicine in the palm of her hand and knew she was afraid to die. Nevertheless, she wrapped them in a piece of paper and put them in her pocket.

Someone was coming down the stairs of the apartment house. It would be Mrs. Feng. She always waited at her window to wave to Ai-hua as she went to work. If she found her here now, what could Ai-hua say? She hid behind the kitchen door until Mrs. Feng had assured herself that all was as usual.

"I've got to get out of here," thought Ai-hua. "The park! Nobody will be there today. I've got to come to some decision quickly."

Should she leave a note? Inspector Ch'en should know the truth, so no one else could be blamed. She wrote a quick message and left it on the table, "Fu-min, tell the inspector it was I who did it." There was no one else to worry about what happened to her.

Once at the park, in her favorite spot under the tree, she decided there was no reason to hurry. It was a beautiful day; the blossoms from the camel's foot tree were dropping in her lap. She would pretend for a little while that everything in the world was the way she wanted it to be—her father and Grandmother alive, Fu-min with them on a picnic in the park. Grandmother would have her back against that nearby tree and would be making a shoe sole, running the heavy needle through her hair to oil it before the next stitch, pulling the rope twine with her teeth to make it tight. Nobody could make shoe soles that wore like Grandmother's.

Father and Fu-min would be having a discussion, Grandmother putting in her dissent, no matter what the subject. Father and Fu-min would enjoy talking to each other. Fu-min might be the one to win Father over from his old thoughts and ways. Surely Father would tell Fu-min of his hopes for the new

China and of how his daughter and her husband and their sons and daughters would work for this best time for every man, woman and child in the whole country.

It was such a wonderful dream! And such a bitter awakening to reality. "Leave me. Go away, you whom I love. I can't bear even the dream," she moaned, covering her face with her hands.

Fu-min disappeared; Grandmother disappeared, but Ai-hua's father stood before her as alive as he had ever been. He held out his hand to her saying, "Give me the pills, Ai-hua. You are not to come to me yet. China needs you. God needs you. No, do not cringe when I say it. Remember, you are not alone. No matter how much you may feel alone, there is always One beside you who loves you even more than I can love you. Remember how you used to pretend you were the princess who helped to save China? You *are* a princess; you are the daughter of the King. All the resources of God, the King, are at your disposal. There is a way; you will find it. Now, give me the pills."

Dutifully, Ai-hua took the medicine from her pocket and unfolded the wrapping. The pills rolled off in the grass and disappeared, as a voice behind her spoke her name.

When she saw Fu-min, she got up quickly and ran as fast as she could, but with a few long strides, he was beside her, holding her, gently leading her back to the tree. "Why didn't you come to work?" he asked. "You didn't even let us know. We've been worried. What is the matter, Ai-hua?"

"Don't you know?" she asked.

"Mrs. Feng phoned me this morning and asked if I'd come over. Nothing was going to stop her this time from moving all your belongings into her house while you were at work. She said you'd been acting strange. I thought so, too, especially when you were not at work and she thought you were. So, since she'd asked me, I said I'd come over during lunch time and help her. Luckily I got into your place first and found the note. What

did you mean, ‘Tell the inspector I was the one who did it.’ Did what?”

“Surely you know, Fu-min.”

“You’d better tell me all about it.”

“Life is so strange,” Ai-hua began. “*You* are so strange, Fu-min. I don’t know how to tell you what happened. One minute you are my friend, the next you are walking off without even seeing me to my gate. Now you have come searching for me at a time when I can only bring you trouble.”

“What do you mean, bring me trouble? Tell me, Ai-hua. I know I don’t deserve your confidence after the way I’ve been acting lately. Something is on *my* mind, too, but never mind about that now. Tell me the whole story.”

Ai-hua began with her childhood. She spoke of the strong bond of affection between her and her father. She told of his love for his country and his belief that Jesus preached and taught and lived the best of Communism—that if the people of China would only follow him, they would be good Communists and China would be the greatest nation on earth.

It was a relief to be able to talk so freely. “Father used to say that we Communists only lacked one thing,” she went on, “a recognition of God as a Father who cared for each individual, who called them his sons and daughters. This gave men dignity. Each person was important in God’s eyes.”

“That’s ridiculous!” Fu-min interrupted. “The individual is *not* important; the state is important. Why, if we went around asking everybody what he wanted and how he wanted it, where would China be today? We wouldn’t have made an inch of progress. It’s only because we are willing to sacrifice our individual wishes, even what we think of as individual needs, that China has progressed to what she is today. No wonder your father was in trouble.”

“Now you’re cross with me again. I can’t talk to you. I can’t speak about my father if you are against him, because then you won’t understand why I did what I did.”

"I wish you'd just skip all this and tell me exactly what you did and why you did it," said Fu-min.

"Remember, Fu-min, your father is alive, a man in good standing in his community. You love your father. Try to think what it would be like to see him with his hands bound behind his back, marched through the streets, humiliated before friends and neighbors, before all those who had come to respect him. Even if you knew your father was wrong in his thinking, would you want to see this happen to him? Would you love him any less?"

"No, I guess I wouldn't. I see what you mean, Ai-hua. Were Christians so persecuted then?"

"Never because they were Christians. After they took my father away, my teacher spent a long time explaining Chairman Mao's order giving all people religious freedom. I don't know what he was accused of, nor who accused him. That was what I felt I had to know."

"And that's why you went through the files?"

"I was looking for my father's papers. How did you know someone had been in the files?"

"I realized as soon as I got in this morning that somebody had given those files a thorough going over. And that somebody was a very foolish little girl, Ai-hua. You shouldn't have left your pencil on top of the cabinet, you know; especially after taking such pains to smudge off two or three of that whole mess of fingerprints."

"Does Inspector Ch'en know?"

"He isn't back yet."

"Fu-min, what are you going to do with me?"

"I don't know. I have to think about it. It's a good thing I got to work earlier than usual this morning and cleared everything up. The others don't know about it either. You can come back to work as usual for the time being."

"I won't have you covering up for me. It will only mean trouble for you."

"I couldn't do that, Ai-hua; you know I couldn't. And not because I am afraid of trouble. What I said was, 'Come back *for the time being*.' "

"I don't see how I can. I haven't found my father's file. I am not to be trusted. You won't believe me, but I don't know how I got into your office or what drove me to do what I did. Once before I almost opened those drawers. Something keeps pushing me to search until I find out what I have to know. I'm not even sure that my father is dead, though three different people who were with him in the correction camp told us he died there of an illness. Where *are* my father's papers, Fu-min? You must know."

"Why can't you accept the facts as they have been told to you and forget the past? Why do you feel you have to know? Wouldn't it be better to forget? Surely you can do that. Unless there is a deeper reason, something you have to know *because*. . . ."

"Because I am afraid that in my effort to make my teacher and my school friends believe I was a good Communist and not a Christian, I said something against him and caused his death."

"Lots of kids have felt they had to do that; you know it. It's a most patriotic thing to do. For the good of the many, we can't think of ourselves or even of our families. You know what Chairman Mao says, 'Be resolute, fear no sacrifice. . . .'"

Chairman Mao. She hadn't thought of him nor opened her little red book since . . . it might have been years ago.

"Would you accuse your father, if he were wrong?" she asked.

"I don't know. I'd reason with him and try to change him, I guess, but . . . I don't know, Ai-hua. I don't know what I'd do. Let's not talk about it. I have to think what my father would do if I turned against all he'd taught me, not the other way around. My grandfather was one of the first to welcome Communism to our part of the country and my father and mother have worked for the party all their lives. Now I'm all mixed up and it's *your* father's fault."

"I don't understand. How can my father have anything to do with you and your family?"

"You asked me if I knew where your father's papers were. They are in the drawer of my desk where you found the flashlight. I had my reasons for wanting to know about you."

"Was I already under suspicion?"

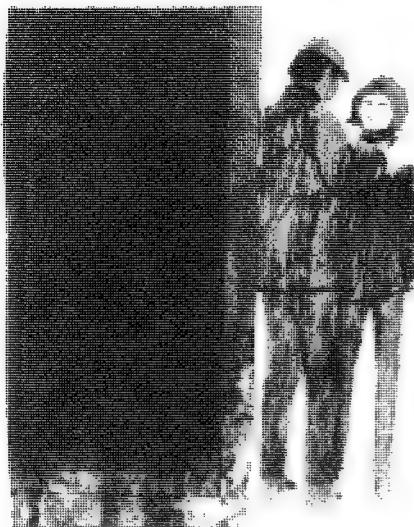
"These were personal reasons which I don't want to discuss now. It might have been better if I, too, had been satisfied with the present. What has the past got to do with us? I wish I'd never read your father's writings. I wish I'd never heard anything about him."

"You have read my father's papers?"

"Yes. You wondered why I'd suddenly changed toward you. Your father's confession got my thinking all mixed up. Right now, I don't know what I believe. Sometimes I wish I'd never met you."

"You've read my father's confession. Oh, Fu-min, I know it is too much to ask, but may I see it? May I read it, too? I'll do anything if only you will let me read those papers."

Fu-min rose to his feet. "I will tell the inspector you are sick and won't be in for a few days. I told Mrs. Feng I'd be right back to help her, but I'll phone her that I'm busy on a case but will come Sunday and move your things. I can do this much for you, Ai-hua. It will give you time to decide whether or not you'll come back to work, and me time to think through carefully how we can proceed—time to make up my mind what to do about us. I can't promise you any more, not even that I will show you your father's papers, so don't count on it. Don't even hope."



Twelve

During the long night, Ai-hua tried to decide what she should do. The pills of poison were gone. It was just as well. That temptation was removed from her. After Fu-min had left the day before, she had searched for the pills, fearing some child might find them, and had thrown them into the pond.

The trouble was that her father had taught her to expect miracles. Had she any right to hope for one now? The more she thought about her father, the more she wondered if he were still alive. Supposing the miracle *had* happened; supposing he had escaped. If he were still alive, he would be in the British colony of Hong Kong. Should she, too, try to escape and go there?

As the night wore on, she knew her "miracle" was only wishful thinking. If her father were still alive after all these years, he would have found a way to let her know where he was. But the idea of going to Hong Kong remained a possibility.

She spent a long time before the photograph of Chairman Mao. In a way, he had been a father to her—at least his picture had been a comfort when she had had no one else to whom to

turn. She read again every word of his thoughts. If she were to leave the country, the little red book would have to stay behind. She found it harder than she had thought to give up the book which had been her constant companion, in the reading of which she had shared so many times with all her friends at the police station. If she went to Hong Kong, there would be no Chairman Mao, no book, no friends, no police station.

She would have to say good-bye to all her dreams of helping the country she loved. Her own dear father's hopes of her being a "princess" in the Golden Age nearing its fulfillment, would never be realized. And she would have to face loneliness, being lost in a crowd of faces, not one of which she would ever have seen before.

"You will not be alone," her father had said. Had she dreamed it? Could she depend on what she had been taught was only a superstition? Would God really stoop to her need, even if there were a God?

Saddest of all, there would be no Fu-min. The work she so enjoyed doing would be done by another girl from another school, a girl highly recommended by her teachers—someone who could be trusted and who would not betray that trust. Fu-min would tease her and walk home with her nights. "I can't bear it," Ai-hua sobbed into her pillow.

But the alternative? To stay in Canton and face the consequences of her act, even if it meant death? Oh, why hadn't she saved the pills? Death could be faced, but the *means* of death? What would the authorities feel must be done to such a person as she? First, public disgrace, of course; she would already have lost her job. Would she be sent to a correction camp? Possibly. Hopefully. But then the new girl would come and Ai-hua would be forgotten. She would be forgotten, no matter what course she took. To stay in Canton and accept the punishment for breaking the security measures of the police station was the more honorable way, she knew. But wouldn't it be easier for everybody concerned if she escaped to Hong Kong?

She felt sure she could find her way there—over the mountains and through the rough, uninhabited region. At the police station, she had heard the confessions of two people who had been captured, one just before he got across the border. Usually the government paid little attention to those who were foolish enough to leave the country that had so much to offer them, for the crowding and unemployment of Hong Kong. China could well afford to lose such fools. Maybe these two had been in as deep trouble as she was in now. Knowing what had happened to them made her realize the terrible risk she would be taking if she were caught.

Daylight at last yellowed the oiled paper windows of her little house. She would have to face Fu-min with no plans made. But perhaps this very day, she would be seeing her father's confession! In spite of what Fu-min had said about not even hoping, a spark shone through her darkness. She dressed and went to the park.

After what seemed like an eternity, she saw him coming toward her down the path. There was nothing in his hands. Well, he had warned her not to hope. He crossed the grass and dropped down beside her, taking a letter from his pocket.

"From Chio-min," he said. "It came just as I was leaving. He's home. The harvest looks like a good one. They'll get it in, plant the next crop and he'll be back with his group to 'do anything that's required,' is the way he put it. He wants me to tell you that if you ever change your mind about coming north, the trees and the fields will welcome you with songs and dances. Isn't that just like Chio-min?"

Chio-min! The brother who had been hers for such a short time! She would probably never see him again. It would have been good to visit his farm and to see all he had described. There was little hope of that now.

Fu-min was saying nothing about her father's papers. Evidently he could not bring himself to taking them from the office. She would not ask him again.

"Can't we both forget the past and go on from here?" asked Fu-min.

"You know we can't," she replied. "It would be like a cancer inside us all our lives. You would hate yourself if you did something disloyal in order to help me. I know you, Fu-min. In time, you would come to hate me for being the cause of it. You can't bring yourself to letting me see my father's file. How can you plan a way out for me?"

They were both quiet for a long time. Then Ai-hua asked, "Is there any way I could request a transfer to another part of the country? Would that relieve you of having to do anything for me?"

"It wouldn't work. You know you could never get permission to leave Canton, and you know that no one travels anywhere without a government permit. Besides, it wouldn't help either of us. Can't you see I don't want you to go away?"

"Why not? It would solve all your problems."

"Ai-hua, I told you once that I had my personal reasons for reading your father's file. Can't you guess what they were?"

"No, I can't, Fu-min."

"Well, someday a man has to . . . well, marry. My family have written many times suggesting it, because they don't like my being alone down here. Of course they want me to come back home to choose a wife. But there is only one person who comes to my mind when I think of marriage—not now, of course, but sometime. I knew my father would object to anyone from the south, even though my mother was from Canton. 'She's different,' he'd say. I had to know all about your background before I told him anything at all. I had to be able to talk him down on all he'd say about your father being a Christian and in disgrace with the government. My father would look you up, you know. He'd learn all about what happened to your father. But if he could admire him as a man, in spite of his beliefs, it would help. And your being a relative of Chief Inspector Han would help."

"Now I don't know what to think. My father would never accept into his family a daughter-in-law who had to be punished for her disloyalty. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that. But now you know why I'm acting so strangely. I've been trying to put you out of my life. And now you know why I am trying so hard to save you. I *can't* put you out of my life. I can't let anything happen to you."

She had let him talk on and on, unable to believe what she had been hearing. Fu-min wanted her for his wife! The refrain sang through her mind over and over again. "If I had only known," she murmured. "If I had only known."

"You must have seen that something was happening to me, after that first night in the courtyard."

"I hoped, then, that you cared a little. But when you were so cross you wouldn't even see me to my door, I thought you'd lost interest in me."

"Lost interest in you? How can you say that?"

"It doesn't matter now. Nothing matters. If I had known you cared, even a little, I wouldn't have done what I did. I would have been willing to wait to learn about my father. The irony of it is that my reason for wanting to find out about my past was so I could tell the man I married all the facts of my life. I wanted him to know what kind of a family he was marrying into."

"I know, Ai-hua. I know more about you than you know yourself."

"It's too late. Everything I tried to do was so useless. I've ruined everything."

"Maybe it's not too late. Maybe we can think of a way out—a right way out."

He was fumbling in the inside pocket of his jacket and did not look at her when she said, "Fu-min, there's one more thing I have to tell you."

"What is it?" he asked, turning to her.

"You know I've always insisted that I'm not a Christian—that

I'm a good Communist. Now you know that I'm not a good anything, but even before I committed this crime, I realized I was turning to God more and more, especially after Grandmother died. I found I couldn't believe that putting Grandmother into a coffin was the end for her. And now I find I can no longer say emphatically, 'I'm not a Christian.' It's only fair that you should know this. I don't know whether I am a Christian or not."

He surprised her with his answer. "I understand, Ai-hua. I don't know what *I* think, either. I feel as if I'm breaking apart. China is breaking apart, too. Leaders, so-called, are rising up all over the country, even here in Canton. Some of them are very convincing."

"But, Fu-min, surely you haven't . . ." she lowered her voice to a whisper, ". . . haven't turned against Chairman Mao!"

"Chairman Mao has been my hero ever since I can remember. Now I'm not sure about anybody. I need to talk to someone I can trust. I decided this morning I would ask for leave. I haven't got around to telling you yet, but Chief Inspector Han has requested my transfer to his headquarters. I'll need to talk to him about the job anyway."

"You're going to Wuchou? That changes the whole picture for us!" said Ai-hua.

"It doesn't have to change the picture for us. I have some ideas, but first I want to talk to Chief Inspector Han and his wife. I think I can trust them. They're very understanding people. And your relative has great qualities of leadership, Ai-hua."

"Don't tell him about us, *please* don't, Fu-min. It will spoil all your chances for advancement. Don't tell him anything."

"Leave this to me and don't worry. He was like a father to me when I was there with Inspector Ch'en. He's a man who sees Communism as I see it, the best form of government China ever had, *if* we stick to its best teachings."

"Just as my father believed," said Ai-hua.

Fu-min sighed. "Your father had some great ideas. I do wish he hadn't been a Christian."

"If he hadn't been a Christian, all my troubles would never have happened."

"I should think you'd want to stand up and denounce him for what he's done to your life."

"Fu-min, how can you say such a thing? Such a thought could never enter my head! I love my father."

"Do you want to know something? After I read your father's confession, I sort of felt that way about him, too. Let's read it together. Maybe he has some advice for us."

"You've brought my father's confession? Oh, Fu-min, why didn't you show it to me at once?"

He had taken the thin sheets of rice paper from his inside pocket and was unfolding them carefully. "I hoped we two could forget everything—all the past—and begin a new life from where we are now, right this minute."

"Should you have taken these papers from the office?" she asked, hardly able to restrain herself from snatching them from his hands.

"This is only his first confession, not the full papers. It was printed in a newspaper at the time, so it isn't confidential. Any-one can go to the English newspaper's files and read their trans-lation of this." He smoothed out the papers on his knee, then held them so they both could read.

Ai-hua touched the written characters with her forefinger. There was no doubt about their having been written by her father. Beautifully formed, in her father's style of brush strokes, they recalled the many times when his long scholarly fingers had closed around her chubby hand holding the brush, as he moved with her to make the sweeping strokes of the character he was teaching her at the time. The tears streamed down her face at the memory.

Fu-min steadied her with his arm, and wiped her eyes with his handkerchief as they began to read:



The Confession of Wong Teh Chung

I, Wong Teh Chung, am a counter-revolutionary offender. I am grateful for the patient attitude shown me by my government in giving me this opportunity to make a public confession of my errors, for they grieve me deeply.

Before confessing the guilt that lies so heavily on my heart, I want to state the fact that I am a Christian. Our Chairman, Mao Tse-tung, has proclaimed religious liberty in our land and it is my understanding that he believes it is possible for a man to be a good Christian and a good Communist, even though he, and all of us, agree that we must do away with the many useless and sometimes harmful superstitions that now encrust the religions of China, holding back its progress as barnacles impede the passage of a ship.

It is here that I have failed, for I have neither been a good Communist nor a good Christian. I have failed my country, my parishioners, my friends and my beloved daughter. My teaching and my preaching, in fact my very living, has been heavy with the impediments of Western imperialism. I have been instrumental in building Western buildings and in raising up institutions that have no relevance for China today, nor are they relevant to the life Jesus intended his followers to live.

I thank my government for the blessing it has bestowed upon me in taking me away from all my imperialistic encumbrances, and for locking me apart from the world to look closely at Jesus himself. But in so doing, I am filled with remorse at my failure to live a life commensurate with his teachings. Had I done so, I would not have burdened my people with imperialistic Western ways that have no place in our society today.

I beg my government not to blame my people for the false teachings I have given them. The fault is mine and mine alone—not those who brought the gospel of Jesus to us from across the seas, but mine. How could I have been so lacking in perception? For I obviously failed to see to the core of Jesus' teaching and his way of life! It should have been clear to me from the beginning that he wanted for China the very fullness of life we are all striving to create for the masses today. Why did I not hold before my parishioners and my family the life and works of that great revolutionary, Jesus of Nazareth!

Born into a carpenter's family, he understood perfectly the feelings and reactions of the masses. He was brought up to work with his hands, to help in earning bread for the family. He saw what imperialist Rome was doing to his country and its people. With ideas burning in his heart, he set out to change the lot of the poor and those ground down by Rome. His program was simply stated but far-reaching in its applications—good news for the poor, recovery of sight for the blind, release for captives, liberty for the oppressed.

No wonder that people followed him and that the crowds around him grew larger and larger. No wonder he was considered dangerous by those in high places when, before all the onlookers, he called out, 'Woe to you who are rich and full and who care nothing about the beggars at your door. Woe to you hypocrites in the institutional church who strive to keep things exactly as they are, so your own security will not be threatened.'

To those who followed him, he asked that they sell all they had and that they give this money to the poor. He never wanted his followers to be burdened by possessions. 'If a man takes your coat, give him your shirt as well,' he once said. When the time came for him to send out his disciples, he gave them these instructions, 'Heal the sick, raise the dead, make the lepers clean, drive out demons.' And he asked them not to take even an extra jacket with them on their journeys. They were to live and eat with the people of the village to which they went, but only if the people wished them to do so. Jesus himself had no permanent residence and took no salary. It is easily seen that all he had and all he was, he gave to the *people*. And the day came when the authorities put him to death because he would not be molded into the old, established pattern.

How different have been the lives of his disciples in this generation, we ministers of the church in China, living on our fat salaries in foreign-style houses!

I have mentioned but a few brief excerpts from the history of his life as it is given in the gospels. Jesus believed in the dignity of man. 'God's sons,' he called them. He spoke often of the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth—that kingdom in which every man seeks to know and to do the will of God. I saw it as the Golden

Age for China, yet I failed to do my part in bringing it about. My parishioners, my friends, my child should have been taught to know and to love this revolutionary, Jesus, but I have failed them all.

I want my child to love him and to love her country, as I have loved it. Unlike her father, she has had good Communist teaching all her life. Will what she has learned help her to contribute to what can be the best age China has ever known—an age in which the poorest man can hold his head high, assured that he is of supreme worth—a son of God? Then I shall die content.

If it should happen that this confession fall into the hands of my daughter, I want her to know that she has never given me anything but joy and that I am grateful to God for every moment of life I have had with her. To her I would quote a thought of Chairman Mao, 'The world belongs to you. China's future belongs to you.' And you, my dear child, belong to God.

From my government I ask no leniency. I deserve any punishment it sees fit to give.

Signed,
Wong Teh Chung

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德
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"Then it was not I who informed against him," said Ai-hua. "Oh, Fu-min, I can't thank you enough! You have no idea how happy you have made me. I don't feel guilty, though I know I should. I feel nothing but relief."

She held the thin papers reverently and read them through once more while Fu-min waited beside her. He took out his handkerchief, ready to dry the tears he felt must surely fall. He was in no way prepared to see her jump to her feet, her eyes shining, her face radiant; nor to hear her say, "Sons of God! The daughter of a King! Fu-min, I'm a princess! And I'm no longer afraid to call myself a follower of this revolutionary, Jesus. I know now what my father would want me to do."

"No, for God's sake, no, Ai-hua! This Comrade Jesus will lead you into deeper trouble than you've ever known before."

"*Deeper* trouble is the kind I need to be in, Fu-min. I've been thinking only of myself. Now I must find out how I can best help China; how I can best help you."

"It isn't possible to be a good Communist and a good Christian. Your father found that out. You've read his confession; you know what happened to him. He said all the things he shouldn't have said in that confession, but not because he didn't know what he was saying. He knew what he believed and nothing could stop him from proclaiming that belief. He even admitted his guilt—more than admitted it. He was sorry for his blindness in following the Imperialist foreigners. He was not afraid to let his own words convict him. This could happen to you!"

"It could," she replied. "Anything could happen to me now, including death or a new life. I should be in a state of terror, but I'm not afraid, Fu-min, I'm not afraid. I've never known such peace. Isn't it strange?"

"Ai-hua, *think*. Today is not the day your father lived in. All religions have to go—Taoism, Buddhism, even Confucianism, as well as Christianity. You know this. You know what the Red Guard is doing. You've read the reports. Are you crazy?"

"I've never felt so sane in my whole life," she replied.

"Ai-hua, listen to me. You can't be a Christian in a Communist country. It doesn't make sense. Can you imagine Chinese coins with 'Christian' stamped on one side and 'The People's Republic of China' on the other? You're in trouble up to your ears now. Don't make it impossible for yourself."

Still no shadow of fear moved across her face. "My father used to show me the ancient coins of the emperor who wanted to do away with all religion. He destroyed the Buddhist bells and used the bronze to make coins for his realm. On one side was the emperor's seal; on the other, the names of the towns where the temple bells had hung. It may be that I can be like the bronze that became useful to the emperor."

"Only if it is melted in the boiling cauldron, Ai-hua; only if it is crushed with the seal of state."

"There is a way; you will find it," my father once told me. 'China needs you,' he said. 'God needs you.' But where should I be to help China most? I don't know."

He took her by the shoulders as if to shake the message into her, his face white with intensity. "Look at me," he said. Slowly she lifted her head and looked into his eyes. "Remember, so far, nobody knows what you have done. Before you decide to follow this strange comrade who lived two thousand years ago, promise me one thing."

"What, Fu-min?"

"That you will do nothing until I return from seeing your relative, Chief Inspector Han."

She waited a moment before answering, then said, "It seems a right thing to do. I will wait. I need time—time to find out where God wants me to go."

"Wherever that is, it will not be beyond the range of my vision," he said softly, tucking the little curl under her cap. Then he turned and walked resolutely across the grass.

Her shoulders felt warm where his hands had held her.

STUDY GUIDE FOR *"How Many Sides to a Chinese Coin?"*

There was a time when the world could ignore what was happening in China. "Let China sleep," Napoleon advised, "when she awakes, the world will be sorry." Napoleon's advice must be heeded now, for China has awakened and is strenuously asserting her role in world affairs. Once again China would be "the Central Kingdom," around which the rest of the world revolves—at any cost. Nor is China isolated, as she was in the past. Her neighbors know very well she is next door. And many of the emerging nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America are wondering if the Communist revolution in China might not be the model for them to follow.

Some Western nations, including Canada, have maintained relationships with the People's Republic of China. Other powers, notably the United States, have yet to recognize "Red China," and this lack of international relationship has been a cause of friction and world concern. World peace requires an understanding of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese people—seven hundred million people cannot be ignored.

Christians have been vitally interested in China since the very first missionaries ventured into the vast Chinese empire in the sixth century. The day of Christian missionaries from the West is past, but the contributions of the church in China remain, and a church of, by, and for the Chinese is present, in a limited form, in China today. God is never without his witnesses, and the day will come when his church in China will be of such strength and vitality that it will be able to serve the Chinese people and nation in the name of Jesus Christ—not as a Western religion, but as the Christian church in China.

Such then are the reasons why a study of China and her people is important today. For young people who want to learn about China *How Many Sides to a Chinese Coin?* is very useful. This book also presents information about China, her people, her problems and prospects, as seen by three young Chinese whose own lives have been shaped by the forces now at work in China. The story takes place in Canton at the height of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the Red Guard movement of 1966-1967. The great giant known as China is wide awake.

SIX ISSUES FOR INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP STUDY

Six main issues are listed in this study guide. Individuals and groups can consider these issues, read and reflect upon the quotations and comments related to the issues and use the projects that are provided as a means of studying the issues in depth. With imagination and adequate preparation, the issues and projects provided can be the basis for studies by a church

school, school of missions, camp or conference study group, interdenominational assembly or any study group. There are sufficient suggestions for as many as twelve study sessions.

BEFORE THE FIRST MEETING

Before the first meeting of the group that will study China and the Chinese people, using *How Many Sides to a Chinese Coin?*, you can do the following:

- . . . be sure every participant has a copy of the book to read before coming to the first meeting.
- . . . arrange for films, recordings and other resources to arrive in time to be previewed prior to use.
- . . . have on hand resources to be used, and pictures of *present-day* China from *National Geographic*, *Life*, *Look* and other pictorial magazines.
- . . . make a bulletin board display or montage (pictures torn from magazines and pasted together in random fashion) of news photos and clippings concerning China, or examples of Chinese writing, art and culture.
- . . . have banners and wall posters on display (in English, with slogans or news written in the style of present-day Chinese political banners and posters).
- . . . put up as a wall poster the mixed-up account listed in Issue 5. (Explain that this is a mixed-up account that the group can correct as the study progresses.)
- . . . play some authentic Chinese music as the group gathers. (See Resource list for recordings.)

ISSUE 1: *The Young People of China*

CHINESE NAMES

Chinese surnames are written first, and the given names are written last. Thus, Li Fu-min is from the Li family, and his given name is Fu-min. Often the children in a family are given names that are similar or matching. Here are some of the names used in the book, with their explanations:

王 爱 华 Wong Ai-hua. "Love China"

王 德 中 Wong Teh-chung. "Virtuous China"

李 辅 民 Li Fu-min. "Help the people"

李 救 民 Li Chio-min. "Save the people"

Mao Tse-tung. Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and since the 1920's the leader of the communist movement in China.

Liu Shao-ch'i. The President of the People's Republic of China, an old time communist who was denounced by Mao as a "revisionist" or one who was not true to the cause.

People's Liberation Army. The communist army that fought the Nationalists for many years, eventually defeating them in 1949.

The Long March. The famous retreat of the People's Liberation Army in 1934. Fifty thousand communist troops marched six thousand miles to escape the Nationalists. Seven thousand completed the march to Yenan and became the nucleus of the later successful communist revolution.

The Tang Dynasty and the Golden Age of China. Under the Tang rulers (618-906 A.D.) China developed a strong government, great art, culture, and philosophy. Since then Chinese have looked upon that dynasty as "the Golden Age of China."

PROJECTS

1. Have some of the suggested displays and resources ready for the group to browse through when they arrive for the meeting.

2. Seat the group in a circle. Several people can retell the story of *How Many Sides to a Chinese Coin?* Give the group a chance to raise historical questions about events, people and places mentioned in the book. Use the information in this study guide to answer each other's questions. Questions that will fall under the areas to be covered in Issues 2-6 can be listed on a large sheet of paper for future study. Be sure everyone has a good understanding of the plot of *How Many Sides to a Chinese Coin?*

3. "She waited a moment before answering, then said, 'It seems a right thing to do. I will wait. I need time—time to find out where God wants me to go.'" (p. 138)

- How would you finish the story? What do you think Ai-hua will do? How do you think Fu-min will respond to Ai-hua's action?

Finish the story by using a role playing situation, with two persons acting the parts of Ai-hua and Fu-min. Or go around the circle, with each person adding a sentence which leads to the end of the story.

- What roles do young people see for themselves in "the new China"?

Discuss how Ai-hua, Fu-min, and Chio-min see themselves in the new China, or have three persons participate in a role play, taking the parts of Ai-hua, Fu-min and Chio-min. Start the role play by having Chio-min say, "I love the country—it is so vast, and the earth can produce so much. One day I want to go to

agricultural school to learn more about the scientific way to farm. And then I will. . . ."

- c. What seems to be the Chinese young people's view of their country? How does this compare with your views of China? And your views of your own country?
- d. What seems to be the Chinese young people's view of the future for China and for the world?
- e. What makes a Chinese young person such as Ai-hua, Fu-min and Chio-min happy? What seems most important to them? How do they view material wealth? Personal comfort? Compare the characteristics of young people of China which you have listed with the characteristics of young people of Canada and the United States.
- f. In what ways are Ai-hua, Fu-min and Chio-min similar to young people in Canada and the United States? In what ways are they different? Make a list of the similarities and differences, and keep this list available for reference throughout the study to remind you of topics to investigate and discuss.

ISSUE 2: *Education in the New China*

"'What am I saying,' she asked herself, suddenly sitting up in bed. What would my father think of me? What would Chairman Mao think of me? She reached for the pocket of her jacket which hung on a nearby chair, and found her little red book, Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung. 'I've neglected my reading today,' she said to herself. 'How many times have I read? Certainly not five, as I should have.'

She looked up at the large photo of Chairman Mao, hanging on the wall behind Grandmother. Sometimes his benevolent face merged with the memories of her father.

Opening the book, she turned to the chapter on 'Youth' and read, 'The world is yours, as well as ours, but in the last analysis, it is yours. You young people, full of vigour and vitality, are in the bloom of life, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning. Our hope is placed on you. . . . The world belongs to you. China's future belongs to you.' (Pages 17-18)

EDUCATION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

There has always been a high esteem for education in China, and a person having a good education and wisdom was considered wealthier than one who merely had material possessions. However, the many different dialects of the spoken language and the extremely difficult system of writing helped to make education a possibility for only a small minority.

English is based on a phonetic system, in which each letter of the alphabet represents a sound. Learning the sounds of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet enables a person to learn any word in the language. Chinese writing has a separate symbol for every word in the language—a person with a ten thousand word vocabulary has to master ten thousand separate symbols!

The extreme difficulty of the language, along with the lack of opportunity for public education, has been a problem for the Communist Chinese to overcome. Their national campaign to fight illiteracy has had to be waged on several fronts. Some language reforms have taken place, and many of the more intricately written characters of the language have been simplified, in a "shorthand" style of writing. Evening classes are given for adults. But the greatest efforts have been extended toward children and young people.

We must not take for granted that Ai-hua was able to read and write. In the past not many girls were given any formal schooling. In the People's Republic of China education is seen not only for its value in helping the nation advance scientifically and technically, but also politically. Even in the small village, the curriculum includes not only an arduous study of the Chinese language, its written form, its structure, its national pronunciation (*kuo yu*, or Mandarin) and the usual subjects of history (Chinese history only), science, art, gymnastics, music and the like, but there are also courses on political theory. Oftentimes students meet after school hours to hear lectures on the politics of China and to discuss the Chinese view of national and foreign events.

A very important aspect of public education for young people is the volunteer labor-service program, or *lao-dung*. On many weekends or evenings and during summer recesses, young students are assigned to service on farms and in factories. This is an abrupt change from the ancient attitude of disdain that scholars held for any work with hands. The vast labor force thus made available hastens China's development of her food and industrial production potential.

In contrast to Canadian and American educational systems, education in China is quite rigid. The students have little choice of subjects, and even those who pass their examinations successfully may find that they are assigned to jobs that fit the national need more than their own personal needs or preferences. For example, in the 1960's there was a great need for teachers. Many students were assigned to teach in village schools upon completion of their basic education, rather than being given the opportunity to go on to college and then the chance to go on to other fields. In general it can be said that in the People's Republic of China education prepares the people to serve the national interests.

PROJECTS

1. Conduct a role play situation in which Chio-min and Fu-min are interviewed on their views of education in China, including their reac-

tions to a. education for the masses; b. emphasis on science and technology; c. required political indoctrination; d. required labor in a factory or on a farm.

2. Make a chart comparing the roles of young people in Canada and the United States and in China. Show their respective roles in education, the national economy and national service. Show the percentage of people receiving elementary, junior and senior high school (middle school) and college education.

3. Make a chart illustrating the fundamentals of Chinese writing and word-characters compared with the fundamentals of English writing and the alphabet.

4. Discuss how you would eliminate illiteracy in China. What reforms in the system of writing, and what general methods of education would you institute? How would you gain the scientific and technical skill that is needed in every field to help China progress?

5. Gather descriptions and examples of "socialistic art"—drama, art, posters, music and literature that are used to promote Chinese socialistic ideas and ideals. Discuss or debate whether or not it is justifiable to use art as propaganda, and whether or not such a use of art is ever found in Canada and the United States (including commercial "propaganda" or advertisements designed to promote a certain system of economics or political values).

6. Obtain a copy of *The Quotations of Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* ("the little red book"). Read and discuss statements in the book which have to do with young people and education. Compare the daily reading of "the little red book" with the daily devotional reading of the Bible by Christians. How would the Christian church be affected if all Christian young people read a part of the Bible at least twice a day? Should reading the Bible daily be required of all Christians?

7. Gather information on The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the Red Guards from recent magazine articles and books. What were the purposes, methods and actual results of this movement? Debate this question: "Resolved: The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was necessary to China's continued revolutionary development."

ISSUE 3: *Changing Patterns of Life in China*

"I wish I could take you and Grandmother to see Seven Mile Village. She's heard all there is to hear about it. Try to see a fertile valley between low, brush-covered hills, a small stream running through it, and before you, our large communal field spreading out over the wide valley floor. You're standing on a low plateau where our village is located—mud brick

houses for about a hundred and eighty of us. You wouldn't be interested in hearing about the crops and all that.'

'Of course I would. I've never been out of the city. I don't know a thing about farming. Tell me everything.' " (Page 66)

Other references to village and communal life, family life, marriage and the role of women can be found on pages 8, 22, 27-29, 31, 49-50, 65-73, 75-78, 96-97 and 99-100.

EXCERPTS FROM THE MARRIAGE LAW OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

General Principles 1

Article 1 The feudal marriage system, which is based on arbitrary and compulsory arrangements and the superiority of man over woman and ignores the children's interests, shall be abolished.

The New-Democratic marriage system, which is based on the free choice of partners, on monogamy, on equal rights for both sexes, and on the protection of the lawful interests of women and children, shall be put into effect.

Article 2 Bigamy, concubinage, child betrothal, interference with the remarriage of widows, and the exaction of money or gifts in connection with marriages, shall be prohibited.

The Marriage Contract 2

Article 3 Marriage shall be based upon the complete willingness of the two parties. Neither party shall use compulsion and no third party shall be allowed to interfere.

Article 4 A marriage can be contracted only after the man has reached twenty years of age and the woman eighteen years of age.

• • •

Rights and Duties of Husband and Wife 3

Article 7 Husband and wife are companions living together and shall enjoy equal status in the home.

Article 8 Husband and wife are in duty bound to love, respect, assist, and look after each other, to live in harmony, to engage in productive work, to care for the children, and to strive jointly for the welfare of the family and for the building up of the new society.

Article 9 Both husband and wife shall have the rights to free choice of occupation and free participation in work or in social activities.

Article 10 Both husband and wife shall have equal rights in the possession of family property.

Article 11 Both husband and wife shall have the right to use his or her own family name.

Article 12 Both husband and wife shall have the right to inherit each other's property.

PROJECTS

1. Make a model and/or organization chart of a typical commune. Compare this with a kibbutz in Israel.
2. Make fashion drawings or paper dolls illustrating the ancient and the present-day styles of dress in China. What are some reasons for the very plain styles of dress in China today?
3. Dramatize, in Chinese Communist style (propaganda style), the following situations:
 - a. the old and the new roles of women in China
 - b. the Confucian patriarchal-filial society (loyalty of the son to the father and to the family) vs. the communist society (loyalty to the state)
 - c. new methods and customs for funerals, cremation, burials and cemeteries
 - d. massive public health campaigns to eliminate flies, mosquitoes and other pests
 - e. a street committee (responsible for the daily affairs of all people living on a given street) deciding how much coal, flour and salt will be distributed to each person
 - f. a labor brigade evaluating the work output of the previous month and setting a new quota for the next month.
4. Debate the following issues:
 - a. Communes are necessary to bring China into the twentieth century in terms of agriculture and industry.
 - b. China and the socialistic system provides a better model for revolutionizing the social order of the emerging nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America than does the United States and the system of free enterprise.
 - c. The new status of families and of women in China is more practical than the old Confucian status.
 - d. To establish a truly revolutionary order, a government must have the power to assign young people to fields of study, types of service and places of work.

ISSUE 4: ***How to Feed 700 Million People***

"But there is important work for you to do here," she urged. "I don't mean taking care of Grandmother, but this Cultural Revolution. Only you young men can do it. As soon as Inspector Ch'en finishes his study of your case, you'll be back at your most important work."

"You don't understand," said Chio-min. "Right now, nothing is more im-

portant than getting in that grain. I've seen more of China than I ever knew existed. Now I see with my own eyes how many mouths there are to feed, and I see as I never saw before how important it is for us to do a good job of raising food to feed all these people."" (Pages 69-70)

Other references to China's economic needs, her agriculture and industry can be found in chapters 2, 7, and 10.

"Diligence and frugality should be practised in running factories and shops and all state-owned, co-operative and other enterprises. The principle of diligence and frugality should be observed in everything. This principle of economy is one of the basic principles of socialist economics. China is a big country, but she is still very poor. It will take several decades to make China prosperous. Even then we will still have to observe the principle of diligence and frugality. But it is in the coming few decades, during the present series of five-year plans, that we must particularly advocate diligence and frugality, that we must pay special attention to economy."

From Quotations of Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, XX, p. 187.

CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN 1963

ANNUAL TOTAL			
	Apparent Consumption of Crude Steel (Thousand MT)	Electricity Generated (Million KWH)	Food Grain Production (Million MT)
			Gross National Product (Million US \$)
COMMUNIST CHINA			
CHINA (1963 est.)	11,500	50,000	56,600
USA (1963)	102,309	1,011,215	4,747,000
USSR (1963)	77,347	412,418	190,000
			(1962)
JAPAN (1963)	24,726	160,203	48,656
PER CAPITA			
	Crude Steel (kg.)	Electricity (KWH)	Food Grain (kg.)
			Gross National Product (\$)
COMMUNIST CHINA			
CHINA (1963 est.)	16	70	79
USA (1963)	540	5,330	2,507
USSR (1963)	344	1,835	845
JAPAN (1963)	258	1,670	507

For additional charts of China's economic development, see Appendix I, Tables IV and V, in *China, The Hungry Dragon* (see Resource list).

PROJECTS

1. The Chinese Communists refer to the system of land ownership prior to 1949 as "the feudal system" and they claim the landlords were cruel and corrupt in their treatment of the peasants. Find out all you can about the system of land ownership and food production and distribution prior to 1949 and compare this with the Communist system. Show your findings on a chart. Prepare a skit that a team of young Chinese Communists might present in a remote village to promote the Communist system and denounce the old system.

2. Make a large map showing the locations and types of crops and industry in China. As an inset list the major imports and exports of China. List the nations who trade with China.

3. On the basis of your research concerning China's population, food production, industries, and technical skills, develop a "five-year plan" that will

- a.** feed 700 million people
- b.** improve the general standard of living
- c.** lead to a favorable balance of trade (exports exceeding imports).

In the five-year plan show what priorities are to be given to what crops and industries.

(See the chart above for an indication of China's economic development compared with three other nations.)

4. Discuss or debate the following issues:

- a.** Free enterprise could not have done what communism has done to increase Chinese food production and industry in the last twenty years.
- b.** The United States should trade (or should not trade) with the People's Republic of China.
- c.** Canada, Australia, and Great Britain should discontinue trade with China.

5. Compose music for the songs in this book or compose a folk song that the Chinese might use to encourage farm and factory output.

6. Make huge, colorful posters similar to those used in China to encourage economic growth.

ISSUE 5: *China and the World*

"Imperialism will not last long because it always does evil things. It persists in grooming and supporting reactionaries in all countries who are

against the people, it has forcibly seized many colonies and semi-colonies and many military bases, and it threatens the peace with atomic war. Thus, forced by imperialism to do so, more than 90 per cent of the people of the world are rising or will rise up in struggle against it. Yet imperialism is still alive, still running amuck in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In the West imperialism is still oppressing the people at home. This situation must change. It is the task of the people of the whole world to put an end to the aggression and oppression perpetuated by imperialism, and chiefly by U.S. imperialism."

From Quotations of Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, VI, pages 77-78.

A MIXED-UP STORY

(Twenty-one facts in the following paragraphs are deliberately jumbled. Try to detect the parts that are incorrect, and correct them.)

China has considered herself as "the Central Kingdom" since ancient times. Isolated geographically, China was the leader in politics, learning, trade and science. The last one hundred years have been especially good for China. Since 1842 China has surpassed the Western nations. China defeated Great Britain in the Opium War. China gained the right to use opium, which benefitted her citizens greatly. However, various Western powers signed "unequal treaties" with China, giving Western merchants great advantages over Chinese merchants. Meanwhile, the Chinese rulers, the Manchus, gave strong leadership to China, with great reforms of the landlord system. Poverty was reduced because the peasants were given their own land to till.

In 1900 the Manchus encouraged a group of fanatics to attack the Western merchants and missionaries who were well established in China. The Boxer Rebellion was put down by the joint military forces of the United States, Russia and Japan. China was forced into more humiliation.

In 1911 Mao Tse-tung succeeded in overthrowing the Manchu rulers of China. He established the Republic of China. The new nation had a hard time getting established and finding funds to run the government. However, the warlords who ruled sections of the country gladly turned over their land to the ruling party, the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party). Russia, a Communist country, was one of the few nations to aid the new Chinese republic.

The new republic was governed cooperatively by two parties: the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, which was led by Chiang Kai-shek. During World War II China was invaded by Japan. The Communists and Nationalists fought together against the Japanese. However, after World War II ended, the United States helped the Communists drive the Nationalists out of the People's Republic of China. The Nationalists retreated to Korea and have stayed there since. The Communists, led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, proclaimed the People's Republic of China as the legitimate rulers of all China. Under Dr. Sun's leadership China once

again became a world power, and many Chinese once again feel they are "the Central Kingdom."

With *United States sponsorship*, the People's Republic of China was admitted to the United Nations in 1950. These two countries fought side-by-side during the Korean War. Because the United States and the People's Republic of China have been such good friends, these two world powers have made world peace a lasting reality.

PROJECTS

1. Underline in pencil the portions of the "mixed-up" story above that you think are inaccurate. After research and discussion on the topic of China and the World is completed, return to the story and make the corrections that will "straighten out" the mixed-up story.

2. Make a map of China and the countries that surround her. Use colors to mark the nations that are friendly, neutral, or not friendly with China. On a large sheet of paper list the following information in a chart:

- a. the ten major powers of the world
- b. their relationship to Communist China (friendly, neutral, not friendly)
- c. the basic reasons for their relationships.

3. Discuss the following, using whatever discussion method seems best for your group (buzz groups, triads, panel discussions, debates):

- a. Since ancient times China has called herself "the Central Kingdom." Why does she consider herself to have this position?
- b. Some people claim that China suffers from *xenophobia*. What is *xenophobia*? Is China's *xenophobia* justified? How can it be changed? What can the United States and Canada do to help change China's *xenophobia*?
- c. Why does China single out the United States as its special "enemy"? What has the United States done in the last twenty-five years that is not pleasing to Communist China? How could relationships between China and the United States be improved?
- d. Is co-existence with Communist China possible for the United States?
- e. Why does China feel that it must have an effective nuclear bomb?

4. Debate the following:

- a. China is using Communism merely as a means of regaining the status of "the Central Kingdom" of the world.
- b. Communist China should be admitted to the United Nations.
- c. The United States and Canada should fear China rather than Russia.
- d. Communist China is the model for the emerging nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

5. Using topics listed in items 3 and 4 above, write a questionnaire and

conduct a survey of the attitudes of people in your church, school or community concerning Communist China and her place in the world.

ISSUE 6: *Old vs. New Values and Religions*

"Ai-hua, think. Today is not the day your father lived in. All religions have to go—Taoism, Buddhism, even Confucianism, as well as Christianity. You know this. You know what the Red Guard is doing. You've read the reports. Are you crazy?"

'I've never felt so sane in my whole life,' she replied.

'Ai-hua, listen to me. You can't be a Christian in a Communist country. It doesn't make sense. Can you imagine Chinese coins with "Christian" stamped on one side and "The People's Republic of China" on the other? You're in trouble up to your ears now. Don't make it impossible for yourself.' (Page 125)

Other references to the clash of old values and religions with new values can be found on pages 8, 13, 18, 22, 46, 75-77 and especially in chapters 11 and 12.

"Communism is at once a complete system of proletarian ideology and a new social system. It is different from any other ideological and social system, and is the most complete, progressive, revolutionary and rational system in human history. The ideological and social system of feudalism has a place only in the museum of history. The ideological and social system of capitalism has also become a museum piece in one part of the world (in the Soviet Union), while in other countries it resembles 'a dying person who is sinking fast, like the sun setting beyond the western hills', and will soon be relegated to the museum. The communist ideological and social system alone is full of youth and vitality, sweeping the world with the momentum of an avalanche and the force of a thunderbolt."

From Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, III, pages 23-24.

PROJECTS

1. What is the significance of the title of this book, *How Many Sides to a Chinese Coin?* What conflicts must Ai-hua resolve in her life? What did Jesus say about "two sides of the same coin"? (Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26) Do you think Ai-hua can be a Christian in Communist China? Why or why not?

2. At one point in the story (page 120) Ai-hua raises the question, "Am I a Christian?" If she had asked you that question, how would you have helped her find an answer?

3. Analyze the letter written by Wong Teh Chung, Ai-hua's father. Where do you agree, and where do you disagree with the letter? Was Pastor Wong a Communist? Was he a Christian? Was he both Christian and Communist?

4. Divide into small groups to discuss the following issues raised in the book:

- a. the Christian emphasis on individual dignity and worth as opposed to the Communist emphasis on the importance of the masses and the state
- b. the belief in life after death, and the Christian and the Communist beliefs in the purpose of the present life
- c. the validity of prayer
- d. the value of devotional reading (of the Bible or "the little red book")
- e. the revolutionary Christ (see Wong Teh Chung's letter, pages 122-124).

5. How should the church proceed to work in China, if it were allowed to be free and active in 1975?

- a. How would you develop a Christian church that is "of, by, and for the Chinese"?
- b. What evangelistic strategies, if any, would you carry out?
- c. How would you decide whether or not it is possible or advisable to be both a Christian and a Communist?

6. Discuss or debate the following issues:

- a. The old religions (Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity) are irrelevant and unnecessary to "the new China."
- b. Christianity is a Western religion for Western people only.
- c. Christians cannot be true patriots because they love and obey a power higher than the state.
- d. Asia (and China) must develop a non-Westernized Christianity.

7. Have each person in the group express an idea about the following:

- a. What message about Jesus Christ do you think would be most appealing to a Chinese?
- b. Skim the Gospel of Mark and find the images and illustrations of rural life, ancient or simple culture and non-Western customs that would be familiar to a Chinese (for example, 1:4—a prophet in the desert; 1:16—two fishermen with nets; 1:21—Jesus as a revered teacher).
- c. What contributions could a strong Chinese church make to the worldwide Christian community?

A Selected List of Resources

The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. A list of current magazine articles. An important tool for studying the rapidly changing situation in China. School and public libraries have this guide. Look under "China" in the guide. Two magazine series are notable: "China," a three part series in *Life Magazine*, Sept. 23, 30, and Oct. 7, 1966. (Available as a Life Educational Reprint, Box 834, Radio City P.O., New York, N.Y. 10019.) Special China Issue, *Diplomat Magazine*, Sept. 1966.

C. P. Fitzgerald, *The Chinese View of Their Place in the World*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964. Paperbound. A perceptive brief study of Chinese history and foreign relations.

Robert Goldston, *The Rise of Red China*. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1967. A well illustrated history of China, with emphasis on the twentieth century. Written for young people.

L. Carrington Goodrich, *A Short History of the Chinese People*. Third ed., Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1959. Paperbound. A standard history of China.

Lisa Hobbs, *I Saw Red China*. New York: Avon Books, 1966. Paperbound. A thorough, fair and well-written account of conditions in China.

Dun J. Li, *The Ageless Chinese: A History*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965. A history of China, somewhat sympathetic to the Nationalists.

Mao Tse-tung, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1966. The famous "little red book."

Jan Myrdal, *Report from a Chinese Village*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1965. Fascinating interviews with villagers in China, providing an authentic description of the communes, schools and attitudes of Chinese peasants. Illustrated.

Sansan, as told to Bette Lord, *Eighth Moon*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964. A firsthand account of home and school life, labor-service and economic conditions in China in the late 1950's.

John Scott, *China: The Hungry Dragon*. New York: Parents' Magazine Press, 1967. A history of China and report of current conditions, including very useful charts of economic development.

Myra Scovel, *Red Is No Longer a Color*. New York: Friendship Press, 1967. Pictures and text describing contemporary China.

Ross Terrill, *China Profile*. New York: Friendship Press, 1969. Present-day conditions, the history of China's foreign relations and family life described for young readers.

For information on the history, culture and geography of China, look under "China" in a standard encyclopedia.

Audio-Visual Resources

Films and Filmstrips:

Beyond the Great Wall. Film, by Robert Menegoz. China in the 1950's, with impressive scenes of the land and people.

China: The Roots of Madness. Film, based on TV documentary, Narrated by T. H. White, 1967. The Chinese dilemma in foreign relations shown against the history of humiliation by the Western powers in the last century. (Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation)

China: The Awakening Giant. Film. An overview of industrial and agricultural development in modern China. Shows how the country tries to meet its needs in food production, education, transportation and industry. (McGraw-Hill Films)

China: The Old and the New. Film. Shows the role of the communist government in bringing about change; helps young people understand China as a nation in transition; accents progress already made. A comprehensive film that can be used alone. (McGraw-Hill Films)

(For rental of the above films, write to the audio-visuals education department of your state university.)

The Great Wall. Filmstrip, approximately 70 frames, color, sound, script. \$10.00. Shows, through a variety of photographs and art forms, the contributions made to the world by old China and ways new China is reshaping the past. (Friendship Press)

Records:

The following record albums represent authentic, ancient Chinese music and not music popularized for Western hearing.

Liang Tsai-ping and David Ming-yuah Liang.

Ten selections on the *cheng*, an ancient stringed instrument. Lyricord LL 142.

Lui Tsum-yuen. Nine selections on the *p'i-p'a* and *ch'in*, ancient stringed instruments. Lyricord LL 122.

Beyond the Great Wall. Monitor MP 525. Soundtrack from the film by the same name. Includes wedding, New Year's and worksong music.

377-19401-8

\$1.75

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

With her husband, Dr. Frederick Scovel, the author lived and worked in China as a medical missionary for close to twenty years.

Asked whether this book gave her special problems, Mrs. Scovel said the most difficult was "Having to go back and 'live' in Communist China . . . I had to make myself work every day. But I loved the people in the story and I liked being with them."

Red Is No Longer a Color, a picture story of present-day China, is another of Myra Scovel's Friendship Press books. She also wrote, for children, **The Buffalo and the Bell**, **George and the Chinese Lady** and **The Mysterious Mr. Cobb**.

The mother of six, Mrs. Scovel has an R.N. degree from Syracuse University.

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